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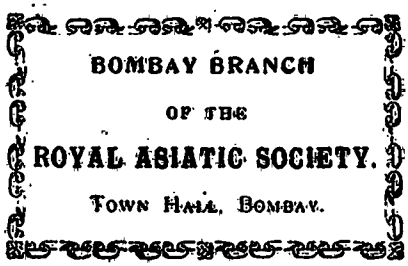

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LIFE

AND

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

DAVID HUME.

FROM THE PAPERS BEQUEATHED BY HIS NEPHEW TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH; AND OTHER ORIGINAL SOURCES.

By JOHN HILL BURTON, Esq.
ADVOCATE.

VOLUME I.

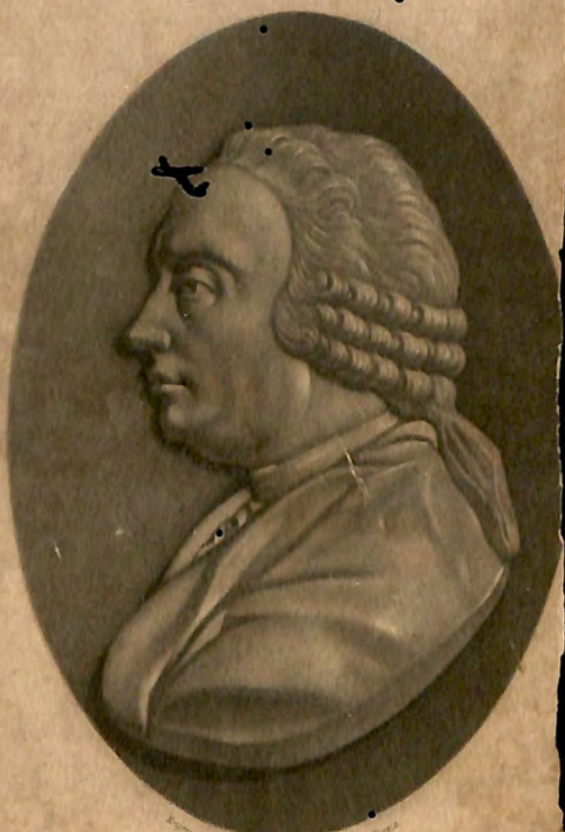
21190

EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM TAIT, 107, PRINCE'S STREET.
MDCCCXLVI.

922 441
Hum/Hum/48
21190.

00021190

EDINBURGH:
Printed by WILLIAM TAIT, 107, Prince's Street.



DAVID HUME

TO THE PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL

OF

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

J. H. BURTON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In this work, an attempt has been made to connect together a series of original documents, by a narrative of events in the life of him to whom they relate; an account of his literary labours; and a picture of his character, according to the representations of it preserved by his contemporaries. The scantiness of the resources at the command of previous biographers, and the extent and variety of the new materials now presented to the world, render unnecessary any other apology for the present publication. How far these materials have been rightly used, readers and critics must judge; but I may be perhaps excused for offering a brief explanation of the spirit in which I desired to undertake the task; and the responsibility I felt attached to the duty, of ushering before the public, documents of so much importance to literature.

The critic or biographer, who writes from materials already before the public, may be excused if he give way to his prepossessions and partialities, and limit his task to the representation of all that justifies and supports them. If he have any misgivings, that, in following the direction of his prepossessions, he may not have taken the straight line of truth, he may be assured, that if the cause be one of any interest, an

advocate, having the same resources at his command, will speedily appear on the other side. But when original manuscripts are for the first time to be used, it is due to truth, and to the desire of mankind to satisfy themselves about the real characters of great men, that they should be so presented as to afford the means of impartially estimating those to whom they relate. We possess many brilliant Eulogiums of the leaders of our race — many vivid pictures of their virtues and their vices — their greatness or their weakness. But if a humbler, it is perhaps a no less useful task, to represent these men — their character, their conduct, and the circumstances of their life, precisely as they were; rejecting nothing that truly exemplifies them, because it is beneath the dignity of biography, or at variance with received notions of their character and the tendency of their public conduct. The desire to have a closer view of the fountain head whence the outward manifestations of a great intellect have sprung, is but one of the many examples of man's spirit of inquiry from effects to their causes; and the desire will not be gratified by reproducing the object of inquiry in all the pomp and state of his public intercourse with the world, and keeping the veil still closed upon his inner nature. It is difficult to write with mere descriptive impartiality, and without exhibiting any bias of opinion, on matters which are, at the same time, the most deeply interesting to mankind, and the objects of their strongest partialities. Though the task that was before me was simply to describe,

and never to controvert, I do not profess to have avoided all indications of opinion in the departments of the work which have the character of original authorship. I have the satisfaction, however, of reflecting, that the documents, which are the real elements of value in this work, are impartially presented to the reader, and that nothing is omitted which seemed to bear distinctly on the character and conduct of David Hume.

I now offer a few words in explanation of the nature of these original documents. The late Baron Hume had collected together his uncle's papers, consisting of the letters addressed to him, the few drafts or copies he had left of letters written by himself, the letters addressed *by* him to his immediate relations, and apparently all the papers in his handwriting, which had been left in the possession of the members of his family. To these the Baron seems to have been enabled to add the originals of many of the letters addressed by him to his intimate friends, Adam Smith, Blair, Mure, and others. The design with which this interesting collection was made, appears to have been that of preparing a work of a similar description to the present; and it is a misfortune to literature that this design was not accomplished. On the death of Baron Hume, it was found that he had left this mass of papers at the uncontrolled disposal of the Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. This learned body, after having fully considered the course proper to be adopted in these circumstances, determined that they would permit the papers to be made use of by any person

desirous to apply them to a legitimate literary purpose, who might enjoy their confidence. Having for some time indulged in a project of writing a life of Hume, postponed from time to time, on account of the imperfect character of the materials at my disposal, I applied to the Council of the Royal Society for access to the Hume papers; and after having considered my application with that deliberation which their duty to the public as custodiers of these documents seemed to require, they acceded to my request. The ordinary form of returning thanks for the privilege of using papers in the possession of private parties, appears not to be applicable to this occasion; and I look on the concession of the Council as conferring on me an honour, which is felt to be all the greater, that it was bestowed in the conscientious discharge of a public duty.

The Hume papers, besides a manuscript of the "Dialogues on Natural Religion," and of a portion of the History, fill seven quarto volumes of various thickness, and two thin folios. In having so large a mass of private and confidential correspondence committed to their charge, the Council naturally felt that they would be neglecting their duty, if they did not keep in view the possibility that there might be in the collection, allusions to the domestic conduct or private affairs of persons whose relations are still living; and that good taste, and a kind consideration for private feelings should prevent the accidental publication of such passages. On inspection, less of this description of matter was found than so large a mass of private

documents might be supposed to contain. There is no passage which I have felt any inclination to print, as being likely to afford interest to the reader, of which the use has been denied me; and I can therefore say that I have had in all respects full and unlimited access to this valuable collection. Before leaving this matter, I take the opportunity of returning my thanks for the kind and polite attention I have received from those gentlemen of the Council, on whom the arrangements for my getting access to these papers, imposed no little labour and sacrifice of valuable time.

A rumour has obtained currency regarding the contents of these papers, which seems to demand notice on the present occasion.

It is stated in *The Quarterly Review*,[1] that "those who have examined the Hume papers—which we know only by report — speak highly of their interest, but add, that they furnish painful disclosures concerning the opinions then prevailing amongst the clergy of the northern metropolis: distinguished ministers of the gospel encouraging the scoffs of their familiar friend, the author of 'the Essay upon Miracles;' and echoing the blasphemies of their associate, the author of the 'Essay upon Suicide!'" I have the pleasing task of removing the painful feelings which, as this writer justly observes, must attend the belief in such a rumour, by saying that I could not find it

[1] No. LXXIII. p. 555.

justified by a single sentence in the letters of the Scottish clergy contained in these papers, or in any other documents that have passed under my eye. I make this statement as an act of simple justice to the memory of men to whose character, being a member of a different church, I have no partisan attachment: and I may add that, in the whole course of my pretty extensive researches in connexion with Hume and his friends, I found no reason for believing that letters containing evidence of any such frightful duplicity ever existed.

Among these papers, a variety of letters, chiefly from eminent foreigners, though interesting in themselves, were entitled to no place in the body of this work, as illustrative of the life and character of Hume. These I had intended to print in an appendix, believing that, though not directly connected with my own project, the lovers of literature would not readily excuse me for neglecting the opportunity afforded by my access to these papers, for adding to the stock of the letters of celebrated men. But the work, according to its original scope and design, continuing to increase under my hands, I found that if it contained the documents specially referred to in the text, its bulk would be sufficiently extended, and I have determined to let the other papers here alluded to follow in a separate volume, which will contain letters to Hume from D'Alembert, Turgot, Diderot, Helvétius, Franklin, Walpole, and other distinguished persons.

The reader will find that many original documents

printed in this collection have been obtained from other sources than the Hume papers. My acknowledgments are particularly due to the Earl of Minto, for the liberality with which he allowed me the uncontrolled use of the large and valuable collection of correspondence between Hume and Sir Gilbert Elliot. For the letters in the Kilravock collection I am indebted to Cosmo Innes, Esq., sheriff of Morayshire; and I obtained access to those addressed to Colonel Edmondstoune, through the polite intervention of George Dundas, Esq., sheriff of Selkirkshire. I am obliged to the kindness of Lord Murray for much assistance in obtaining materials and information for this work; and to Robert Chambers, Esq., who has been accustomed from time to time, to preserve such letters and other documents connected with Scottish biography, as came under his notice, I have to offer my thanks for the whole of his collections regarding Hume, which he generously transferred to me.

In the use of printed books, where the Advocates' Library, to which I have professional access, has failed me, I have found the facilities for consulting the select and well arranged collection of the Writers to the Signet of great service.

I owe acknowledgments to many friends for useful advice in the conduct of the work. To one especially, who, after having long occupied a distinguished place in the literature of his country, permits his friends still to enjoy the social exercise of those intellectual qualities that have delighted the world, I am indebted for such critical counsel as no other could have given,

and few would have had the considerate kindness to bestow, were they able.

Of the two portraits engraved for this work, that which will, probably, most strikingly attract attention, is taken from a bust, of coarse and unartistic workmanship, but bearing all the marks of a genuine likeness. It was moulded by a country artist, at the desire of Hume's esteemed friend, Professor Ferguson; and I am under obligations to his son, Sir Adam, for the privilege of using it on this occasion, and to Sir George Mackenzie, for having kindly mentioned its existence, and exerted himself in its recovery, after it had been long lost sight of. The medallion, from which the other portrait is taken, is in the possession of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., by whom I was presented with the engraved plate, from which the fac simile of a letter, addressed by Hume to his collateral ancestor, is printed.

Edinburgh, February, 1846.

*** It may be right to explain, that the two sizes of type, used in this work, were first adopted with the design of presenting all letters addressed to Hume, all extracts, and all letters from him with which the public is already familiar, in the smaller type, in order that the reader coming to a document with which he is already acquainted, might see at once where it ends. This arrangement was accidentally broken through, several letters having been printed in the larger that should have appeared in the smaller type.

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THE LIFE

OF

DAVID HUME.

CHAPTER I.

1711 — 1734. ÆT. 0 — 23.

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DAVID HUME was born at Edinburgh, on the 26th of April,[1] 1711. He was the second son of Joseph Hume, or Home, proprietor of the estate of Ninewells, in the parish of Chirnside, in Berwickshire. His mother was a daughter of Sir David Falconer of Newton, who filled the office of Lord President of the Court of Session from 1682 to 1685, and is known to lawyers as the collector of a series of decisions of the Court of Session, published in 1701. His son, the brother of Hume's mother, succeeded to the barony of Halkerton in 1727. Mr. Hume the elder, was a member of the Faculty of Advocates.[2] He appears, how-

[1] Old Style.

[2] He is entered in the list of members on 23d June, 1705, as "Mr. Joseph Hume of Ninewalls." It thus appears that the ortho-

ever, if he ever intended to follow the legal profession as a means of livelihood, to have early given up that view, and to have lived, as his eldest son John afterwards did, the life of a retired country gentleman.

It is an established rule, that all biographical attempts of considerable length, shall contain some genealogical inquiry regarding the family of their subject. The present writer is relieved both of the labour of such an investigation, and the responsibility of adjusting it to the appropriate bounds, by being able to print a letter in which the philosopher has himself exhibited the results of an inquiry into the subject.

DAVID HUME *to* ALEXANDER HOME *of Whitfield.*

"*Edinburgh*, 12*th April*, 1758.

"DEAR SIR,—I was told by Mrs. Home, when she was in town, that you intended to make some researches into our family, in order to give them to Mr. Douglas, who must insert them, or the substance of them, into his account of the Scottish nobility.[1] I think that your purpose is very laudable, and is very obliging to us all; and for this reason I shall inform you of what I know of the matter. These hints will at least serve to point out to you more authentic documents.

"My brother has no very ancient charters: the oldest he has, are some charters of the lands of Horndean. There he is designated Home, or Hume, of Ninewells.

graphy of the name adopted by his son, and which will be found to have been so much the subject of dispute, was not a novelty to the family.

[1] Both the "Peerage" and the "Baronage" of Scotland, by Robert Douglas, are well known to Scottish genealogical antiquaries. The former was published in 1764. The latter, in which there is a brief account of the Ninewells' family, in 1798.

The oldest charters of Ninewells are lost. It was always a tradition in our family, that we were descended from Lord Home, in this manner. Lord Home gave to his younger son the lands of Tinningham, East Lothian. This gentleman proved a spendthrift and dissipated his estate, upon which Lord Home provided his grandchild, or nephew, in the lands of Ninewells as a patrimony. This, probably, is the reason why, in all the books of heraldry, we are styled to be cadets of Tinningham; and Tinningham was undoubtedly a cadet of Home. I was told by my grand-aunt, Mrs. Sinclair of Hermiston, that Charles earl of Home told her, that he had been looking over some old papers of the family, where the Lord Home designs Home of Ninewells either his grandson or nephew, I do not precisely remember which.

"The late Sir James Home of Blackadder showed me a paper, which he himself had copied a few days before from a gravestone in the churchyard of Hutton: the words were these—'Here lies John Home of Bell, son of John Home of Ninewells, son of John Home of Tinningham, son of John Lord Home, founder of Dunglas.'

"I find that this Lord Home, founder of Dunglas, was the very person whom Godscroft says went over to France with the Douglas, and was father to Tinningham: so thus the two stories tally exactly. He was killed either in the battle of Crevant or Verneuil, gained by the Duke of Bedford, the regent, against the French. Douglas fell in the same battle. I think it was the battle of Verneuil. All the French and English histories, as well as the Scotch, contain this fact. This Lord Home was your ancestor, and ours, lived in the time of James the First and Second of Scotland, Henrys the Fifth and Sixth of England.

"I have asked old Bell the descent of his family. He said he was really sprung from Ninewells, but that the lands fell to an heiress who married a brother of Polwarth's.

"By Godscroft's account, Tinningham was the third son of Home in the same generation that Wedderburn was the second, so that the difference of antiquity is nothing, or very inconsiderable.

"The readiest way of vouching these facts would be for you to take a jaunt to the churchyard of Hutton, and inquire for Bell's monument, and see whether the inscription be not obliterated; for it is above twenty-five years ago that I saw the paper in Sir James Home's hand, and he told us, at that time, that the inscription was somewhat difficult to be read. If it be still legible it would be very well done to take a copy of it in some authentic manner, and transmit it to Mr. Douglas, to be inserted in his volume. If it be utterly effaced, the next, but most difficult task would be to search for the paper above-mentioned in the family of Home: it must be some time about the year 1440 or 1450. If both these means fail, we must rest upon the tradition.

"I am not of the opinion of some, that these matters are altogether to be slighted. Though we should pretend to be wiser than our ancestors, yet it is arrogant to pretend that we are wiser than the other nations of Europe, who, all of them, except perhaps the English, make great account of their family descent. I doubt that our morals have not much improved since we began to think riches the sole thing worth regarding.[1]

[1] In connexion with this, it is not uninteresting to view Hume's opinions on the philosophy of family pride. He says, in the Treatise of Human Nature, Book ii. p. i. sect. 9.—"'Tis evident that,

"If I were in the country I should be glad to attend you to Hutton, in order to make the inquiry I propose. I doubt whether my brother will think of doing it: he has such an extreme aversion to every thing that savours of vanity, that he would not willingly expose himself to censure; but this is a justice that one owes to their posterity, for we are not certain that these matters will be always so little regarded.

"I shall farther observe to you, that the Lord Home, founder of Dunglas, married the heiress of that family, of the name of Pepdie, and from her we always bear the Pepingos in our arms.

"I find in Hall's Chronicle that the Earl of Surrey, in an inroad upon the Merse, made during the reign of Henry the Eighth, after the battle of Flouden, destroyed the castles of Hedderburn, West Nisgate, and Blackadder, and the towers of East Nisgate, and Winwalls. The names, you see, are somewhat disfigured; but I cannot doubt but he means Nisbet and Ninewells: the situation of the places leads us to that conjecture.

when any one boasts of the antiquity of his family, the subjects of his vanity are not merely the extent of time and number of ancestors, but also their riches and credit, which are supposed to reflect a lustre on himself on account of his relation to them. He first considers these objects; is affected by them in an agreeable manner; and then returning back to himself, through the relation of parent and child, is elevated with the passion of pride, by means of the double relation of impressions and ideas. Since, therefore, the passion depends on these relations, whatever strengthens any of the relations must also increase the passion, and whatever weakens the relations must diminish the passion. Now 'tis certain the identity of the possession strengthens the relation of ideas arising from blood and kindred, and conveys the fancy with greater facility from one generation to another, from the remotest ancestors to their posterity, who are both their heirs and their descendants. By this facility the impression is transmitted more entire, and excites a greater degree of pride and vanity."

"I have reason to believe, notwithstanding the fact, as Ninewells lay very near Berwick, our ancestors commonly paid contributions to the governor of that place, and abstained from hostilities and were prevented from ravages. There is, in Hayne's State Papers, a very particular account of the ravages committed by an inroad of the English, during the minority of Queen Mary.[1] Not a village, scarce a single house in the Merse, but what is mentioned as burnt or overthrown, till you come to Whitwater. East of the river, there was not one destroyed. This reason will perhaps explain why, in none of the histories of that time, even the more particular, there is any mention made of our ancestors; while we meet with Wedderburn, Aiton, Manderston, Cowdenknows, Sprot, and other cadets of Home.

"I have learned from my mother, that my father, in a lawsuit with Hilton, claimed an old apprizing upon the lands of Hutton-Hall, upon which there had been no deed done for 140 years. Hilton thought that it must necessarily be expired; but my father was able to prove that, during that whole time there had not been forty years of majority in the family. He died soon after, and left my mother very young; so that there was near 160 years during which there was not forty years of majority.[2] Now we are upon this

[1] The document is quoted in Book ii. of Robertson's History of Scotland.

[2] A tragic incident occurred in the year 1683, in which Hume of Ninewells, and Johnston of Hilton, were victims to the revengeful passions of a brother of the Earl of Home, vented under circumstances of singular treachery and inhospitality. It is thus narrated in Law's Memorials, p. 259. "December, 1683, about the close of that moneth, the Earl himself being from home, the Lairds of Hilton and Nynhools came to make a visit to the Earl of Home his house, and went to dice and cards with Mr. William Home, the Earl's brother. Some sharp words fell amongst them at their

subject, I shall just mention to you a trifle, with regard to the spelling of our name. The practice of spelling Hume is by far the most ancient and most general till about the Restoration, when it became common to spell Home contrary to the pronunciation. Our name is frequently mentioned in Rymer's Fœdera, and always spelt Hume. I find a subscription of Lord Hume in the memoirs of the Sidney family, where it is spelt as I do at present. These are a few of the numberless authorities on this head.

"I wish the materials I give you were more numerous and more satisfactory; but such as they are, I am glad to have communicated them to you.—I am," &c.[1]

game, which were not noticed, as it seemed to them; yet, when the two gentlemen were gone to their bed-chambers, the foresaid Mr. William comes up with his sword and stabs Hilton with nine deadly wounds, in his bed, that he dies immediately; and wounds Nynhools mortally, so that it was thought he could not live, and immediately took horse and fled into England—a treacherous and villanous act done to two innocent gentlemen, the fruits of dicing and card gaming."

"Joseph Johnstone of Hilton was stabbed by Mr. William, brother to Charles earle of Hume. Hilton being of a lofty temper, had given Mr. Hume bad words in his own house of Hilton, and a box on the ear. . . . And William Hume made his escape to England, on Hilton's horse. He was after killed himself in the wars abroad."—Lord Fountainhall's Diary, p. 33.

The editor of Law, Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe, appends the following farther notices of this incident:—

"Before his death he is said to have returned to Scotland, smitten with remorse, and anxious to obtain pardon of a near male relation of Johnstone's, then residing in Edinburgh. This gentleman, in the dusk of the evening, was called forth to the outside stairs of the house, to speak with a stranger muffled in a cloak. As he proceeded along the passage, the door being open, he recognised the murderer; and immediately drawing his sword, rushed towards him, on which the other leapt nimbly down from the stairs into the street, and was never again seen in Scotland." These events were made the subject of an amusing sketch in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal*, No. 569.

[1] Copy MS. communicated by Dr. Vallange, Portobello.

A competent authority in such matters gives the following partly heraldic, partly topographical account of the Humes and their territory: —

"Hume of Ninewells, the family of the great historian, bore 'Vert a lion rampant, argent, within a bordure or, charged with *nine wells*, or springs, barry-wavy and argent.'

"The estate of Ninewells is so named from a cluster of springs of that number. Their situation is picturesque. They burst forth from a gentle declivity in front of the mansion, which has on each side a semicircular rising bank, covered with fine timber, and fall, after a short time, into the bed of the river Whitewater, which forms a boundary in the front. These springs, as descriptive of their property, were assigned to the Humes of this place, as a difference in arms from the chief of their house."[1]

The scenes amidst which Hume passed his boyhood, and many of the years of his later life, have subsequently, in the light of a national literature, become a classic land, visited by strangers, with the same feeling with which Hume himself trod the soil of Mantua. In his own days, the elements of this literature were no less in existence; but it was not part of his mental character to find any pleasing associations in spots, remarkable only for the warlike or adventurous achievements they had witnessed. Intellect was the material on which his genius worked: with it were all his associations and sympathies; and what had not been adorned by the feats of the mind had no charm in his eye. Had he been a stranger of another land, visiting at the present, or some later day, the scenes of the Lay and of Marmion, they would, without doubt,

[1] Hist. and Allus. Arms, p. 400, where the information is derived from Douglas's Baronage.

like the land of Virgil, have lit in his mind some sympathetic glow; but the scenes illustrated solely by deeds of barbarous warfare, and by a rude illiterate minstrelsy, had nothing in them to rouse a mind, which was yet far from being destitute of its own peculiar enthusiasm. He had often, in his history, to mention great historical events that had taken place in the immediate vicinity of his paternal residence, and in places to which he could hardly have escaped, if he did not court occasional visits. About six miles from Ninewells, stands Norham castle. Three or four miles farther off, are Twisel bridge, where Surrey crossed the Till to engage the Scots, and the other localities connected with the battle of Flodden. In the same neighbourhood is Holiwell Haugh, where Edward I. met the Scottish nobility, when he professed himself to be the arbiter of the disputes between Bruce and Baliol. In his notices of these spots, in connexion with the historical events which he describes, he betrays no symptom of having passed many of his youthful days in their vicinity, but is as cold and general as when he describes Agincourt or Marston Moor; and it may safely be said, that in none of his historical or philosophical writings does any expression used by him, unless in those cases where a Scoticism has escaped his vigilance, betray either the district or the country of his origin.[1]

[1] Unless such allusions as the following be held as an exception: "The north of England abounds in the best horses of all kinds which are perhaps in the world. In the neighbouring counties, north side of the Tweed, no good horses of any kind are to be met with." Essay on National Characters. But he speaks fully as distinctly and specifically of local matters in France or Spain.

The remarks in the text may probably be considered superfluous, being applicable to by far the greater portion of literary men—as those who have attempted to trace, from the internal evidence of their works, the birthplaces of authors not commemorated by their contemporaries,

Hume tells us, in his short autobiography, "My family was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and education of her children." He says no more of his education, than that he "passed through the ordinary course of education with success." In a document which will be immediately quoted at length, we find him speaking of having received the usual college education of Scotland, which terminates when the student is fourteen or fifteen years old. It is probable that he studied at the University of Edinburgh, in the matriculation book of which the name of

can testify. Thomson, also a borderer, and a poet of rural life, has scarcely any allusion that bears a distinct reference to the scenery of his childhood, and celebrates the heroism of almost every land but his own. In that age, however, to be national in Scotland was to be provincial in Britain; and unless an author chose to aim at the restricted reputation of a Ramsay or a Pennecuik, he must carefully shun allusions to his native country. But the very existence of this, as a general characteristic, seems to render it worthy of notice in this instance, which must certainly be held, like Thomson's, a peculiarly marked illustration of this feature in literary history. Hume had frequently to record events which had taken place close to his home; and the whole of the surrounding district was full of traditional lore, about the wild life of the borderers in the seventeenth century, which would have afforded valuable materials for his history, and some of his other works, had he been one of those who derive their knowledge from men as well as from books. But these volumes will afford ample opportunity for observing, that he required to place no great restraint on his pen to keep it free of provincial allusions; and that, even in his most familiar letters, though he often speaks of the friends of his youth, he says nothing of the places in which he spent his early days.

"David Home" appears, as intrant of the class of William Scott, Professor of Greek, on 27th February, 1723. Holding the year to commence on 1st January, which was then the practice in Scotland, though not in England, he would be at that time nearly twelve years old. The name does not appear in any of the subsequent matriculation lists: it was probably not then the practice for the student to be entered more than once, at the commencement of his curriculum; and neither the name of Hume, nor of Home, occurs in the list of graduates.

Of his method of studying, and of his habits of life, after he left the university, as of his literary aspirations and projects, we fortunately possess some curious notices in his correspondence. The earliest letter written by Hume, known to be extant, is in a scroll which has been apparently preserved by himself. It is addressed to Michael Ramsay, with whom it will be seen, from the letters quoted in the course of this work, that the friendship formed, when both were young, remained uninterrupted and vigorous during their mature years. I have been unable to discover any thing of the history of this Michael Ramsay, beyond what may be gathered from the internal evidence supplied by the correspondence. He must have been destined for the English Church, but he appears not to have taken orders; as in a letter from Hume, which, though undated, must have been written at an advanced period of both their lives, he is addressed "Michael Ramsay, Esq." Writing on 5th June, 1764, he says to Hume, "I continue in the old wandering way in which I have passed so much of my life, and in which it is likely I shall end it." He appears to have had many connexions well to do in the world, and to have died before the year 1779,

leaving his papers in the possession of a nephew having his own Christian name of Michael; which was also, it may be observed, the name of the Chevalier Ramsay, of whom Hume's correspondent was perhaps a relation.[1]

HUME *to* MICHAEL RAMSAY.

"*July* 4, 1727.

"DR M.—I received all the books you writ of, and your Milton among the rest. When I saw it, I

[1] Among the Hume Papers in the possession of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, there is a letter from the chevalier, addressed to "Monsieur de Ramsay, à l'Hôtel de Provence, Rue de Condé, Faubourg St. Germain," dated 1st September, 1742. The receiver of this letter was probably the correspondent of Hume, to whom it may have been sent, under the impression that he was the person connected with the Vindication of the Duchess of Marlborough, a book now well known to have been put into shape by Hooke, the historian of Rome. The letter is in English; and it shows that there are works of genius which the author of "The Travels of Cyrus" had not taste to appreciate. He says: —

"I have read the first book of 'The History of Joseph Andrews,' but don't believe I shall be able to finish the first volume. Dull burlesque is still more insupportable than dull morality. Perhaps my not understanding the language of low life in an English style is the reason of my disgust; but I am afraid your Britannic wit is at as low an ebb as the French. I hope to find some more amusement in my Lady Duchess of Marlborough's adventures. They say a friend of ours has some hand in them. I pity his misfortune, if he is obliged to stoop below his fine genius and talents, to please an old rich dowager, that neither deserves apology nor praise, and that would be too much honoured for her merit by an ingenious fine satyr. I long to be in a condition to travel, that I may see and embrace you, make acquaintance with your amiable young Lord, and assure you both of the tender zeal, friendship, and attachment with which I am your most humble and most obedient servant,

"The Ch. RAMSAY."

Perhaps the criticism on Fielding may not be thought inconsistent with the man who pronounced Locke a shallow writer.

perceived there was a difference betwixt preaching and practising: you accuse me of niceness, and yet practise it most egregiously yourself. What was the necessity of sending your Milton, which I knew you were so fond of? Why, I lent your's and can't get it. But would you not, in the same manner, have lent your own? Yes. Then, why this ceremony and good breeding? I write all this to show you how easily any action may be brought to bear the countenance of a fault. You may justify yourself very well, by saying it was kindness; and I am satisfied with it, and thank you for it. So, in the same manner, I may justify myself from your reproofs. You say that I would not send in my papers, because they were not polished nor brought to any form: which you say is nicety. But was it not reasonable? Would you have me send in my loose incorrect thoughts? Were such worth the transcribing? All the progress that I made is but drawing the outlines, on loose bits of paper: here a hint of a passion; there a phenomenon in the mind accounted for: in another the alteration of these accounts; sometimes a remark upon an author I have been reading; and none of them worth to any body, and I believe scarce to myself. The only design I had of mentioning any of them at all, was to see what you would have said of your own, whether they were of the same kind, and if you would send any; and I have got my end, for you have given a most satisfactory reason for not communicating them, by promising they shall be told *vivâ voce*—a much better way indeed, and in which I promise myself much satisfaction; for the free conversation of a friend is what I would prefer to any entertainment. Just now I am entirely confined to myself and library for diversion since we parted.

——— ea sola voluptas,
Solamenque mali —[1]

And indeed to me they are not a small one: for I take no more of them than I please; for I hate task-reading, and I diversify them at pleasure — sometimes a philosopher, sometimes a poet—which change is not unpleasant nor disserviceable neither; for what will more surely engrave upon my mind a Tusculan disputation of Cicero's De Ægritudine Lenienda, than an eclogue or georgick of Virgil's? The philosopher's wise man and the poet's husbandman agree in peace of mind, in a liberty and independency on fortune, and contempt of riches, power, and glory. Every thing is placid and quiet in both: nothing perturbed or disordered.

At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita ——
Speluncæ, vivique laci; at frigida Tempe,
Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somnos
Non absint.[2]

"These lines will, in my opinion, come nothing short of the instruction of the finest sentence in Cicero: and is more to me, as Virgil's life is more the subject of my ambition, being what I can apprehend to be

[1] Virg. Æn. iii. 660.

[2] At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita,
Dives opum variarum: at latis otia fundis,
Speluncæ, vivique lacus; at frigida Tempe,
Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somni
Non absunt.

Virg. Georg. ii. 467 et seq.

In the course of the correspondence which follows, there will be found several quotations from the Latin classics. Hume's handwriting is so distinct, that we can seldom have any doubt of the individual letters written by him. At the same time, as he appears to have always quoted from memory, there is sometimes a greater difference than even that exhibited above, between the original and

more within my power. For the perfectly wise man, that outbraves fortune, is surely greater than the husbandman who slips by her; and, indeed, this pastoral and saturnian happiness I have in a great measure come at just now. I live like a king, pretty much by myself, neither full of action nor perturbation,—*molles somnos*. This state, however, I can foresee is not to be relied on. My peace of mind is not sufficiently confirmed by philosophy to withstand the blows of fortune. This greatness and elevation of soul is to be found only in study and contemplation —this can alone teach us to look down on human accidents. You must allow [me] to talk thus, like a philosopher: 'tis a subject I think much on, and could talk all day long of. But I know I must not trouble you. Wherefore I wisely practise my rules, which prescribe to check our appetite; and, for a mortification, shall descend from these superior regions to low and ordinary life; and so far as to tell you,

his version of it. I have thought, that were I to attempt to correct his quotations, I would be removing valuable data from which the reader may form an estimate of his mental powers and his education. It will perhaps be allowed, that in some instances he shows a fertile invention in substituting words for those which his memory has failed to retain; while in others, as in the above quotation, the fastidious critics of England will perhaps detect traces of the more slovenly classical education of Scotland. In his published works, Hume appears to have anxiously collated his quotations. But in his letters he seems to have been always more anxious about the judicious choice of his own expressions, than the accurate transcription of the words of others. His letters appear to have been carefully composed. He wrote in constant dread of falling into slovenly colloquialisms of style, and was not ashamed to leave on his letters the marks of this anxiety, in corrections and interlineations. This peculiarity must be admitted to be at variance with the received canon of the learned world, which excuses mistakes and clumsy expressions in the vernacular language of a writer, but has no mercy for irregularities in the use of the dead languages.

that John has bought a horse: he thinks it neither cheap nor dear. It cost six guineas, but will be sold cheaper against winter, which he is not resolved on as yet. It has no fault, but bogles a little. It is tolerably well favoured, and paces naturally. Mamma bids me tell you, that Sir John Home is not going to town; but he saw Eccles in the country, who says he will do nothing in that affair, for he is only taking off old adjudications, so it is needless to let him see the papers. He desires you would trouble yourself to inquire about the Earle's affairs, and advise us what to do in this affair.

"If it were not breaking the formal rule of connexions I have prescribed myself in this letter—and it did not seem unnatural to raise myself from so low affairs as horses and papers, to so high and elevate things as books and study—I would tell you that I read some of Longinus already, and that I am mightily delighted with him. I think he does really answer the character of being the great sublime he describes. He delivers his precepts with such force, as if he were enchanted with the subject; and is himself an author that may be cited for an example to his own rules, by any one who shall be so adventurous as to write upon his subject."[1]

This is certainly a remarkable letter to have been written by a youth little more than sixteen years old. If it had been written by one less distinguished by the

[1] From a scroll in the MSS. bequeathed by Baron Hume to the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

An account of these MSS. will be found in the Preface. Henceforth, for the sake of brevity, they will be referred to thus—MS. R.S.E. A part of the above letter has been already printed in the *Literary Gazette* for 1821, p. 762.

originality of his mature intellect, it might be looked upon as one of those illustrations of the faculty of imitation, for which some young persons display peculiar powers; but its grave and high-toned philosophical feeling is evidently no echo of other people's words, but the deeply felt sentiments of the writer. In some measure, perhaps, he deceived himself in believing that he had attuned his mind to pastoral simplicity, and had weeded it of all ambitious longings. If he had a sympathy with Virgil, it was not, as he has represented, with the poet's ideas of life, but with his realizations of it; not with the quiet sphere of a retired and unnoticed existence, but with the lustre of a well-earned fame. Through the whole, indeed, of the memorials of Hume's early feelings, we find the traces of a bold and far-stretching literary ambition; and though he believed that he had seared his mind to ordinary human influences, it was because this one had become so engrossing as to overwhelm all others. "I was seized very early," he tells us, in his 'own life,' "with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and a great source of my enjoyments." Joined to this impulse, we find a practical philosophy partaking far more of the stoical than of that sceptical school with which his metaphysical writings have identified him; a morality of self-sacrifice and endurance, for the accomplishment of great ends. In whatever light we may view his speculative opinions, we gather from the habits of his life, and from the indications we possess of his passing thoughts, that he devotedly acted up to the principle, that his genius and power of application should be laid out with the greatest prospect of permanent advantage to mankind. He was an economist of all his talents from early youth: no memoir of a literary

man presents a more cautious and vigilant husbandry of the mental powers and acquirements. There is no instance of a man of genius who has wasted less in idleness or in unavailing pursuits. Money was not his object, nor was temporary fame; though, of the means of independent livelihood, and a good repute among men, he never lost sight: but his ruling object of ambition, pursued in poverty and riches, in health and sickness, in laborious obscurity and amidst the blaze of fame, was to establish a permanent name, resting on the foundation of literary achievements, likely to live as long as human thought endured, and mental philosophy was studied.

There is among Hume's papers a fragment of "An Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour." It is evidently a clean copy from a corrected scrawl, written with great precision and neatness, and no despicable specimen of caligraphy. From the pains that appear to have been bestowed on the penmanship, and from many rhetorical defects and blemishes which do not appear in any of his published works, it may be inferred that this is a production of very early years, and properly applicable to this period of his life; although its matured thought, and clear systematic analysis, might, in other circumstances, have indicated it as the fruit of a mind long and carefully cultivated. It is scarcely necessary to frame an excuse for quoting such a document on the present occasion. It could not be legitimately incorporated with his works; because, whatever is given to the public in that shape, is presumed to consist of those productions which the author himself, or those entitled to represent him, have thought fit to lay before the public, as the efforts by which the full stretch and compass of his intellectual powers are to be tested. From such

collections, the editor who performs his functions with a kind and respectful consideration for the reputation of the illustrious dead, will exclude whatever is characterized by the crudeness of youth, or the feebleness of superannuation. To the reputation of Hume it would be peculiarly unjust to publish among his acknowledged and printed works, any productions of extreme youth; because, from his earliest years to an advanced period of his life, his mind was characterized by constant improvement, and he was every now and then reaching a point from which he looked back with regret and disapprobation at the efforts of earlier years.

But in a biographical work, where the chief object is the tracing the history of the author's mind, not the representation of its matured efforts, these early specimens of budding genius have their legitimate place, and receive that charitable consideration for the circumstances in which they were written, which their author's reputation demands.

The essay commences with a sketch of the decline of virtue, and the prevalence of luxury among the Romans; and describes their possession of the arts which they had learned in their better days, when not seconded by bravery and enterprise, as furnishing, like the fine clothes of a soldier, a temptation to hostile cupidity. He then represents the conquerors adapting themselves, after the manner peculiar to their own barbarous state, to the habits and ideas of the civilized people whom they had subdued. He represents the conquered people as sunk in indolence, but imperfectly preserving the arts and elegancies transmitted to them by their ancestors; and the conquerors full of energy and activity, as the sources of whatever impulse was thereafter given to

thought or action. They "came with freshness and alacrity to the business; and being encouraged both by the novelty of these subjects and by the success of their arms, would naturally ingraft some new kind of fruit on the ancient stock." He then proceeds with the following train of reflections:—

"'Tis observable of the human mind, that when it is smit with any idea of merit or perfection beyond what its faculties can attain, and in the pursuit of which it uses not reason and experience for its guide, it knows no mean, but as it gives the rein, and even adds the spur, to every florid conceit or fancy, runs in a moment quite wide of nature. Thus we find, when, without discretion, it indulges its devote terrors, that working in such fairy-ground, it quickly buries itself in its own whimsies and chimeras, and raises up to itself a new set of passions, affections, desires, objects, and, in short, a perfectly new world of its own, inhabited by different beings, and regulated by different laws from this of ours. In this new world 'tis so possessed that it can endure no interruption from the old; but as nature is apt still on every occasion to recall it thither, it must undermine it by art, and retiring altogether from the commerce of mankind, if it be so bent upon its religious exercise, from the mystic, by an easy transition, degenerate into the hermite. The same thing is observable in philosophy, which though it cannot produce a different world in which we may wander, makes us act in this as if we were different beings from the rest of mankind; at least makes us frame to ourselves, though we cannot execute them, rules of conduct different from those which are set to us by nature. No engine can supply the place of wings, and make us fly, though the ima-

gination of such a one may make us stretch and strain and elevate ourselves upon our tiptoes. And in this case of an imagined merit, the farther our chimeras hurry us from nature, and the practice of the world, the better pleased we are, as valuing ourselves upon the singularity of our notions, and thinking we depart from the rest of mankind only by flying above them. Where there is none we excel, we are apt to think we have no excellency; and self-conceit makes us take every singularity for an excellency.

"When, therefore, these barbarians came first to the relish of some degree of virtue and politeness beyond what they had ever before been acquainted with, their minds would necessarily stretch themselves into some vast conceptions of things, which, not being corrected by sufficient judgment and experience, must be empty and unsolid. Those who had first bred these conceptions in them could not assist them in their birth, as the Grecians did the Romans; but being themselves scarce half civilized, would be rather apt to entertain any extravagant misshapen conceit of their conquerors, than able to lick it into any form. 'Twas thus that that monster of romantic chivalry, or knight-errantry, by the necessary operation of the principles of human nature, was brought into the world; and it is remarkable that it descended from the Moors and Arabians, who, learning somewhat of the Roman civility from the province they conquered, and being themselves a southern people, which are commonly observed to be more quick and inventive than the northern, were the first who fell upon this vein of achievement. When it was once broken upon it ran like wild-fire over all the nations of Europe, who, being in the same situation with these nations, kindled with the least spark.

"What kind of monstrous birth this of chivalry must prove, we may learn from considering the different revolutions in the arts, particularly in architecture, and comparing the Gothic with the Grecian models of it. The one are plain, simple, and regular, but withal majestic and beautiful, which when these barbarians unskilfully imitated, they ran into a wild profusion of ornaments, and by their rude embellishments departed far from nature and a just simplicity. They were struck with the beauties of the ancient buildings; but, ignorant how to preserve a just mean, and giving an unbounded liberty to their fancy in heaping ornament upon ornament, they made the whole a heap of confusion and irregularity. For the same reason, when they would rear up a new scheme of manners, or heroism, it must be strangely overcharged with ornaments, and no part exempt from their unskilful refinements; and this we find to have been actually the case, as may be proven by running over the several parts of it."

He then inquires into the reason, why courage is the principal virtue of barbarous nations, and why they esteem deeds of heroism, however useless or mischievous, as far more meritorious than useful efforts of government or internal organization. He contrasts the heroism of the barbarous periods of the ancient world, with those of the dark ages of modern Europe; and finding the former selfish and aggrandizing, while the latter is characterized by the more generous features of chivalry, he thus accounts for this characteristic.

"The method by which these courteous knights acquired this extreme civility of theirs, was by mixing love with their courage. Love is a very generous passion, and well fitted both to that humanity and

courage they would reconcile. The only one that can contest with it is friendship, which, besides that it is too refined a passion for common use, is not by many degrees so natural as love, to which almost every one has a great propensity, and which it is impossible to see a beautiful woman, without feeling some touches of. Besides, as love is a capricious passion, it is the more susceptible of these fantastic forms, which it must take when it mixes with chivalry. Friendship is a solid and serious thing, and, like the love of their country in the Roman heroes, would dispel and put to flight all the chimeras, inseparable from this spirit of adventure. So that a mistress is as necessary to a cavalier or knight-errant, as a god or saint to a devotee. Nor would he stop here, or be contented with a submiss reverence and adoration to one of the sex, but would extend in some degree the same civility to the whole, and by a curious reversement of the order of nature, make them the superior. This is no more than what is suitable to that infinite generosity of which he makes profession. Every thing below him he treats with submission, and every thing above him, with contumacy. Thus he carries these double symptoms of generosity which Virgil makes mention of into extravagance.

Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

Hence arises the knight-errant's strong and irreconcileable aversion to all giants, with his most humble and respectful submission to all damsels. These two affections of his, he unites in all his adventures, which are always designed to relieve distressed damsels from the captivity and violence of giants.

"As a cavalier is composed of the greatest warmth of love, tempered with the most humble submission

and respect, his mistress's behaviour is in every point the reverse of this; and what is conspicuous in her temper is the utmost coldness along with the greatest haughtiness and disdain; until at last, gratitude for the many deliverances she has met with, and the giants and monsters without number that he has destroyed for her sake, reduces her, though unwilling, to the necessity of commencing a bride. Here the chastity of women, which, from the necessity of human affairs, has been in all ages and countries an extravagant point of honour with them, is run into still greater extravagance, that none of the sexes may be exempt from this fantastic ornament.

"Such were the notions of bravery in that age, and such the fictions by which they formed models of it. The effects these had on their ordinary life and conversation was, first, an extravagant gallantry and adoration of the whole female sex, and romantic notions of extraordinary constancy, fidelity, and refined passion for one mistress. Secondly, the introduction of the practice of single combat. How naturally this sprung up from chivalry may easily be understood. A knight-errant fights, not like another man full of passion and resentment, but with the utmost civility mixed with his undaunted courage. He salutes you before he cuts your throat; and a plain man, who understood nothing of the mystery, would take him for a treacherous ruffian, and think that, like Judas, he was betraying with a kiss, while he is showing his generous calmness and amicable courage. In consequence of this, every thing is performed with the greatest ceremony and order; and whenever either chance or his superior bravery make either of them victorious, he generously gives his antagonist his life, and again embraces him as his friend. When these fantastic

practices have come in use, the amazed world, who, merely because there is nothing real in all this, must certainly imagine there is a great deal, could not but look upon such a courteous enmity as the most heroic and sublime thing in nature; and instead of punishing any murder that might ensue, as the law directs in such cases, would praise and applaud the murderer." [1]

[1] It may be interesting to compare these extracts with his method of treating the same subject at a later period of his life. The following is taken from his Essay on the Feudal and Anglo-Norman Government and Manners, in the two volumes of his History, first published in 1762.

"The feudal institutions, by raising the military tenants to a kind of sovereign dignity, by rendering personal strength and valour requisite, and by making every knight and baron his own protector and avenger, begat that martial pride and sense of honour, which, being cultivated and embellished by the poets and romance writers of the age, ended in chivalry. The virtuous knight fought not only in his own quarrel, but in that of the innocent, of the helpless, and, above all, of the fair, whom he supposed to be for ever under the guardianship of his valiant arm. The uncourteous knight, who, from his castle, exercised robbery on travellers, and committed violence on virgins, was the object of his perpetual indignation; and he put him to death without scruple, or trial, or appeal, whenever he met with him. The great independence of men made personal honour and fidelity the chief tie among them, and rendered it the capital virtue of every true knight, or genuine professor of chivalry. The solemnities of single combat, as established by law, banished the notion of every thing unfair or unequal in rencounters, and maintained an appearance of courtesy between the combatants till the moment of their engagement. The credulity of the age grafted on this stock the notions of giants, enchanters, spells, and a thousand wonders, which still multiplied during the time of the crusades, when men, returning from so great a distance, used the liberty of imposing every fiction on their believing audience. These ideas of chivalry infected the writings, conversations, and behaviour of men during some ages; and even after they were in a great measure banished by the revival of learning, they left modern *gallantry*, and the *point of honour*, which still maintain their influence, and are the genuine offspring of those ancient affectations."

Perhaps the reader of these passages will have come to the conclusion that the powers of reason displayed in them are as bold and original as the imagination is meagre and servile. The reflections on Gothic architecture are the commonplace opinions of the day, uttered by one who was singularly destitute of sympathy with the human intellect, in its early efforts to resolve itself into symmetry and elegance; whose mind shrunk from the contemplation of any work of man that did not bear the stamp of high intellectual culture. The same want of sympathy with man in his rude and grand, though inharmonious efforts, here attends both the chivalric manners and the solemn architecture of the dark ages. Of the former, he has made a cold, clear, unsympathizing, perhaps accurate estimate. The latter, unless a large proportion of the architectural enthusiasts of the present day have raised the taste of the age upon false foundations, he utterly misappreciated.

It must have been about his seventeenth year that Hume commenced, and abruptly relinquished the practical study of the law,—a curious episode in his history, which he thus describes in his "own life:" "My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an insurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring."

But this by no means gives the reader a full and faithful impression of his motives. The passage calls up the vision of a contemplative, gentle, unambitious youth, shrinking from the arid labours that lead to wealth and distinction, and content to dream away

his life in obscurity with the companionship of his favourite books. The document already referred to, and immediately to be quoted, shows that far other thoughts were in his mind; that he did not shrink from the professional labours of the bar, to sink into studious ease, but rejected them to encounter higher and more arduous toils—that he did not drop passively from the path of ambition opened to him, but deserted it for a higher and more adventurous course. He had indeed already before him the prospect of being a discoverer in philosophy, and his mind, crowded with the images of his new system, could see nothing else in life worthy of pursuit.

Without this clue, Hume's aversion to the study of the law would have been a problem not to be easily solved. Had he lived in the present day, when the mass of statute and precedent that have accumulated even within the narrow domain of Scottish law, have completely precluded those luxurious digressions into the field of speculation and theory, which characterized the legal practice of our ancestors, one might readily comprehend the aversion of his fastidiously cultivated logical mind to such hard and coarse materials. But a lawyer's library, in his days, consisted of the classics, the philosophers of mind, and the civilians. The advocate often commenced his pleadings with a quotation from the young philosopher's favourite poet Virgil, and then digressed into a speculative inquiry into the general principles of law and government: the philosophical genius of Themis long soaring sublime, until at last, folding her wings, she rested on some vulgar question about dry multures or an irritancy of a tailzie, to the settlement of which the wide principles so announced were applied. Surely that science, within the boundaries of which

the speculative spirit of Lord Kames had room for its flights, could not have been rejected on the ground that it cramped and restrained the faculty of generalizing.[1] Yet in a letter to Smith, of 12th April, 1759, which shows that Hume retained his antipathy to the study to an advanced period of his life, he says, "I am afraid of Kames' Law Tracts. A man might as well think of making a fine sauce by a mixture of wormwood and aloes, as an agreeable composition by joining metaphysics and Scottish law. However, the book I believe has merit, though few people will take the pains of inquiring into it."

In truth there appear to have been in Hume all the elements of which a good lawyer is made: clearness of judgment, power of rapidly acquiring knowledge, untiring industry, and dialectic skill; and, if his mind had not been preoccupied, he might have fallen into that gulf in which many of the world's greatest geniuses lie buried—professional eminence, and might have left behind him a reputation limited to the traditional recollections of the Parliament House, or associated with important decisions. He was through life an able, clear-headed man of business, and I have seen several legal documents written in his own hand and evidently drawn by himself. They stand the test of general professional observation; and

[1] Perhaps few authors afford so many curious illustrations of the substitution of fanciful analogy for the severe logic of a practical lawyer, as Lord Kames—*e. g.* when, in his essays on British antiquities, he identifies hereditary descent with the law of gravitation, and the inclination of the mind to continue downwards in a straight line, as a stone falls from a height; so that, "in tracing out a family, the mind descends by degrees from the father, first to the eldest son, and so downwards in the order of age:" pleasant enough speculations, yet not likely to serve any good purpose in practical law.

their writer, by preparing documents of such a character on his own responsibility, showed that he had considerable confidence in his ability to adhere to the forms adequate for the occasion. He talks of it as "an ancient prejudice industriously propagated by the dunces in all countries, that *a man of genius is unfit for business*;"[1] and he showed, in his general conduct through life, that he did not choose to come voluntarily under this proscription.

His writings, however, bear but slight traces of his juridical studies. In analysing the foundations of our notions of property, he criticises some of the subtleties of the early civilians, but shows no more intimate acquaintance with their works than any well-informed scholar of the day might be supposed to exhibit. He shows no pleasure in dwelling on matters connected with this study, but rather appears disposed to release himself and his reader from a subject so little congenial to his taste. The particular law of Scotland is one of those subjects to which he would be careful to avoid a reference, as carrying with it that tone of provincial thought and education which he was always anxious to avoid. It may be perhaps an unfortunate result of this early prejudice against the study of jurisprudence, that in after life he failed to acquire that knowledge of the progress of the law of England, which would have made his history much less amenable than it has been to censorious criticism.

It is now time that the reader should be possessed of the document above alluded to, as throwing much light on Hume's early studies and habits of life; and it is here presented, without any introductory explanation, as it first appeared to me in going through the papers in the possession of the Royal Society.

[1] Essay on Eloquence.

A Letter to a Physician.

"SIR,—Not being acquainted with this handwriting, you will probably look to the bottom to find the subscription, and not finding any, will certainly wonder at this strange method of addressing to you. I must here in the beginning beg you to excuse it, and, to persuade you to read what follows with some attention, must tell you, that this gives you an opportunity to do a very good-natured action, which I believe is the most powerful argument I can use. I need not tell you, that I am your countryman, a Scotsman; for without any such tie, I dare rely upon your humanity even to a perfect stranger, such as I am. The favour I beg of you is your advice, and the reason why I address myself in particular to you, need not be told,—as one must be a skilful physician, a man of letters, of wit, of good sense, and of great humanity, to give me a satisfying answer. I wish fame had pointed out to me more persons, in whom these qualities are united, in order to have kept me some time in suspense. This I say in the sincerity of my heart, and without any intention of making a compliment; for though it may seem necessary, that, in the beginning of so unusual a letter, I should say some fine things, to bespeak your good opinion, and remove any prejudices you may conceive at it, yet such an endeavour to be witty, would ill suit with the present condition of my mind; which, I must confess, is not without anxiety concerning the judgment you will form of me. Trusting, however, to your candour and generosity, I shall, without further preface, proceed to open up to you the present condition of my health, and to do that the more effectually, shall give you a kind of history of my life, after which you will easily learn why I keep my name a secret.

"You must know then that, from my earliest infancy, I found always a strong inclination to books and letters. As our college education in Scotland, extending little further than the languages, ends commonly when we are about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was after that left to my own choice in my reading, and found it incline me almost equally to books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and the polite authors. Every one who is acquainted either with the philosophers or critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper growing in me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium, by which truth might be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last, when I was about eighteen years of age, there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought, which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an ardour natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it. The law, which was the business I designed to follow, appeared nauseous to me, and I could think of no other way of pushing my fortune in the world, but that of a scholar and philosopher. I was infinitely happy in this course of life for some months; till at last, about the beginning of September, 1729, all my ardour seemed in a moment to be extinguished, and I could no longer raise my mind to that pitch, which formerly gave me such excessive pleasure. I felt no uneasiness or want of spirits, when I laid aside my book; and therefore never imagined there was any bodily distemper in the case, but that my coldness

proceeded from a laziness of temper, which must be overcome by redoubling my application. In this condition I remained for nine months, very uneasy to myself, as you may well imagine, but without growing any worse, which was a miracle. There was another particular, which contributed, more than any thing, to waste my spirits and bring on me this distemper, which was, that having read many books of morality, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch, and being smit with their beautiful representations of virtue and philosophy, I undertook the improvement of my temper and will, along with my reason and understanding. I was continually fortifying myself with reflections against death, and poverty, and shame, and pain, and all the other calamities of life. These no doubt are exceeding useful, when joined with an active life, because the occasion being presented along with the reflection, works it into the soul, and makes it take a deep impression; but in solitude they serve to little other purpose, than to waste the spirits, the force of the mind meeting with no resistance, but wasting itself in the air, like our arm when it misses its aim. This, however, I did not learn but by experience, and till I had already ruined my health, though I was not sensible of it. Some scurvy spots broke out on my fingers the first winter I fell ill, about which I consulted a very knowing physician, who gave me some medicine that removed these symptoms, and at the same time gave me a warning against the vapours, which, though I was labouring under at that time, I fancied myself so far removed from, and indeed from any other disease, except a slight scurvy, that I despised his warning. At last, about April 1730, when I was nineteen years of age, a symptom, which I had noticed a little from the beginning, increased consi-

derably; so that, though it was no uneasiness, the novelty of it made me ask advice; it was what they call a ptyalism or wateryness in the mouth. Upon my mentioning it to my physician, he laughed at me, and told me I was now a brother, for that I had fairly got the disease of the learned. Of this he found great difficulty to persuade me, finding in myself nothing of that lowness of spirit, which those who labour under that distemper so much complain of. However upon his advice I went under a course of bitters, and anti-hysteric pills, drank an English pint of claret wine every day, and rode eight or ten Scotch miles. This I continued for about seven months after.

"Though I was sorry to find myself engaged with so tedious a distemper, yet the knowledge of it set me very much at ease, by satisfying me that my former coldness proceeded not from any defect of temper or genius, but from a disease to which any one may be subject. I now began to take some indulgence to myself; studied moderately, and only when I found my spirits at their highest pitch, leaving off before I was weary, and trifling away the rest of my time in the best manner I could. In this way, I lived with satisfaction enough; and on my return to town next winter found my spirits very much recruited, so that, though they sank under me in the higher flights of genius, yet I was able to make considerable progress in my former designs. I was very regular in my diet and way of life from the beginning, and all that winter made it a constant rule to ride twice or thrice a-week, and walk every day. For these reasons, I expected, when I returned to the country, and could renew my exercise with less interruption, that I would perfectly recover. But in this I was much mistaken; for next summer, about May 1731, there grew upon me a very

ravenous appetite, and as quick a digestion, which I at first took for a good symptom, and was very much surprised to find it bring back a palpitation of heart, which I had felt very little of before. This appetite, however, had an effect very unusual, which was to nourish me extremely; so that in six weeks' time, I passed from the one extreme to the other; and being before tall, lean, and raw-boned, became on a sudden the most sturdy, robust, healthful-like fellow you have seen, with a ruddy complexion and a cheerful countenance. In excuse for my riding, and care of my health, I always said that I was afraid of consumption, which was readily believed from my looks, but now every body congratulated me upon my thorough recovery. This unnatural appetite wore off by degrees, but left me as a legacy the same palpitation of the heart in a small degree, and a good deal of wind in my stomach, which comes away easily, and without any bad *goût*, as is ordinary. However, these symptoms are little or no uneasiness to me. I eat well; I sleep well; have no lowness of spirits, at least never more than what one of the best health may feel from too full a meal, from sitting too near a fire, and even that degree I feel very seldom, and never almost in the morning or forenoon. Those who live in the same family with me, and see me at all times, cannot observe the least alteration in my humour, and rather think me a better companion than I was before, as choosing to pass more of my time with them. This gave me such hopes, that I scarce ever missed a day's riding, except in the winter time; and last summer undertook a very laborious task, which was to travel eight miles every morning, and as many in the forenoon, to and from a mineral well of some reputation. I renewed the bitter and anti-hysteric pills twice,

along with anti-scorbutic juice, last spring, but without any considerable effect, except abating the symptoms for a little time.

"Thus I have given you a full account of the condition of my body; and without staying to ask pardon, as I ought to do, for so tedious a story, shall explain to you how my mind stood all this time, which on every occasion, especially in this distemper, have a very near connexion together. Having now time and leisure to cool my inflamed imagination, I began to consider seriously how I should proceed in my philosophical inquiries. I found that the moral philosophy transmitted to us by antiquity laboured under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience: every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and of happiness, without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This, therefore, I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in criticism as well as morality. I believe it is a certain fact, that most of the philosophers who have gone before us, have been overthrown by the greatness of their genius, and that little more is required to make a man succeed in this study, than to throw off all prejudices either for his own opinions or for those of others. At least this is all I have to depend on for the truth of my reasonings, which I have multiplied to such a degree, that within these three years, I find I have scribbled many a quire of paper, in which there is nothing contained but my own inventions. This, with the reading most of the celebrated books in Latin, French, and English, and acquiring the Italian, you may think a sufficient

business for one in perfect health, and so it would had it been done to any purpose; but my disease was a cruel encumbrance on me. I found that I was not able to follow out any train of thought, by one continued stretch of view, but by repeated interruptions, and by refreshing my eye from time to time upon other objects. Yet with this inconvenience I have collected the rude materials for many volumes; but in reducing these to words, when one must bring the idea he comprehended in gross, nearer to him, so as to contemplate its minutest parts, and keep it steadily in his eye, so as to copy these parts in order,—this I found impracticable for me, nor were my spirits equal to so severe an employment. Here lay my greatest calamity. I had no hopes of delivering my opinions with such elegance and neatness, as to draw to me the attention of the world, and I would rather live and die in obscurity than produce them maimed and imperfect.

"Such a miserable disappointment I scarce ever remember to have heard of. The small distance betwixt me and perfect health makes me the more uneasy in my present situation. It is a weakness rather than a lowness of spirits which troubles me, and there seems to be as great a difference betwixt my distemper and common vapours, as betwixt vapours and madness. I have noticed in the writings of the French mystics, and in those of our fanatics here, that when they give a history of the situation of their souls, they mention a coldness and desertion of the spirit, which frequently returns; and some of them, at the beginning, have been tormented with it many years. As this kind of devotion depends entirely on the force of passion, and consequently of the animal pirits, I have often thought that their case and mine

were pretty parallel, and that their rapturous admirations might discompose the fabric of the nerves and brain, as much as profound reflections, and that warmth or enthusiasm which is inseparable from them.

"However this may be, I have not come out of the cloud so well as they commonly tell us they have done, or rather began to despair of ever recovering. To keep myself from being melancholy on so dismal a prospect, my only security was in peevish reflections on the vanity of the world and of all human glory; which, however just sentiments they may be esteemed, I have found can never be sincere, except in those who are possessed of them. Being sensible that all my philosophy would never make me contented in my present situation, I began to rouse up myself; and being encouraged by instances of recovery from worse degrees of this distemper, as well as by the assurances of my physicians, I began to think of something more effectual than I had hitherto tried. I found, that as there are two things very bad for this distemper, study and idleness, so there are two things very good, business and diversion; and that my whole time was spent betwixt the bad, with little or no share of the good. For this reason I resolved to seek out a more active life, and though I could not quit my pretensions in learning but with my last breath, to lay them aside for some time, in order the more effectually to resume them. Upon examination, I found my choice confined to two kinds of life, that of a travelling governor, and that of a merchant. The first, besides that it is in some respects an idle life, was, I found, unfit for me; and that because from a sedentary and retired way of living, from a bashful temper, and from a narrow fortune, I had been little accustomed to general

companies, and had not confidence and knowledge enough of the world to push my fortune, or to be serviceable in that way. I therefore fixed my choice upon a merchant; and having got recommendation to a considerable trader in Bristol, I am just now hastening thither, with a resolution to forget myself, and every thing that is past, to engage myself, as far as is possible, in that course of life, and to toss about the world, from the one pole to the other, till I leave this distemper behind me.

"As I am come to London in my way to Bristol, I have resolved, if possible, to get your advice, though I should take this absurd method of procuring it. All the physicians I have consulted, though very able, could never enter into my distemper; because not being persons of great learning beyond their own profession, they were unacquainted with these motions of the mind. Your fame pointed you out as the properest person to resolve my doubts, and I was determined to have somebody's opinion, which I could rest upon in all the varieties of fears and hopes, incident to so lingering a distemper. I hope I have been particular enough in describing the symptoms to allow you to form a judgment; or rather, perhaps, have been too particular. But you know it is a symptom of this distemper, to delight in complaining and talking of itself. The questions I would humbly propose to you are: Whether, among all those scholars you have been acquainted with, you have ever known any affected in this manner? Whether I can ever hope for a recovery? Whether I must long wait for it? Whether my recovery will ever be perfect, and my spirits regain their former spring and vigour, so as to endure the fatigue of deep and abstruse thinking? Whether I have taken a right

way to recover? I believe all proper medicines have been used, and therefore I need mention nothing of them."

The history of this eventful period in the mental biography of Hume, is very briefly narrated in his "own life." Alluding to his adoption of the life of a student, he says, "My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me."

I am sure the reader will sympathize with me in esteeming it a high privilege to be the humble instrument of ushering into the world so curious a piece of literary autobiography as that which he has just perused. We are here admitted into the confessional. So secret is the communication of thought by the writer to the receiver, that the latter, who was made acquainted with so much of the internal meditations of the former, was not to be allowed to know with what outward man this mind of which he obtained a description was connected. The individual mind was fully and minutely described—to what individual man this mind belonged was to be preserved a profound secret. The writer shrunk from the admission of any man to a participation with him in his self-conferences, and he planned that by keeping his name a secret, the link which would connect this knowledge of the inner to an acquaintance with the outer man should be broken. We have surely in this an argument in favour of the candour and explicitness of his narrative. He felt that to be known, in the ordinary

acceptation of the term, by the person he addressed, would be a restraint on the freedom of his revelations —he threw off this restraint, and we are entitled to infer that his letter is a piece of full and candid self-examination. Every word of it, as it was originally written, is here printed, and it will perhaps be admitted that there is not one word of it that does not do honour to its writer. To Aristotle and others it is attributed that they taught esoteric doctrines to a chosen few—doctrines not to be promulgated to the world at large, because they were likely to have a dangerous influence on minds not skilfully trained for their reception. For any vestiges of these hidden doctrines the world searches, anticipating that in them will be found a nearer approach to that which the philosopher believed in his own mind, as distinct from that which he desired to inculcate on others. In all ages there has been a natural and a praiseworthy curiosity to know the hidden thoughts of great teachers. Mankind in general admit, that truth is what is valuable in all philosophy, and if a man entertained thoughts in his own mind in any way different from those which he taught, it has been a conclusion certainly quite legitimate, that truth is more likely to be found in the former than in the latter. But certainly there can hardly be found any other instance in which a document, so likely to be the honest impress of a philosopher's own mind, has been laid before the world; and it is an attestation of the sincerity with which the opinions then in the course of formation in his mind were believed.

But, independently of the philosophical value of the document, to be thus admitted into the secrecy of the thoughts of a man ambitious of high literary distinction, and who has attained his object, is a rare privilege. The revelation, notwithstanding its foreboding

tone, is calculated to give far more pleasure than pain. The future, which seemed to the desponding philosopher for a moment so dark, we know to have brightened on him. Hume was of the happy few who lived to see their airy castles substantially realized. Comparing what it reveals of the inner man, with the subsequent history of his achievements, the picture supplied by this fragment of autobiography is a happy one. We sympathize with the aspiring dreams of the young man, without feeling that they were afterwards doomed to disappointment. The immediate occasion of his earnest appeal is undoubtedly one of despondency; but it was preceded by hope, as we know it was followed by success; and notwithstanding this passing cloud, it may fairly be pronounced, that though Hume enjoyed through life more than the average portion of human happiness, he had no moments of purer felicity than those in which, in the retirement of his paternal home, he was sketching the airy outline of his subsequent career.

Perhaps the feature that will most forcibly strike the reader, is the evidence of the deep-rooted ambition to found a philosophical reputation, that seems to have filled the mind of the writer of this document. The consciousness that the receiver of the paper must at once perceive this circumstance, and the desire not to let a stranger penetrate his aspiring thoughts, must have been the reasons of his desire for secrecy: it was natural that one who had not entered the lists to struggle for literary distinction, should wish to conceal how strong and inextinguishable was his desire to obtain the prize. The intensity of his anxiety on this subject seems to have made him, in relation to his mind, what the ordinary hypochondriac is as to his physical constitution. The desire to preserve the elements of

distinction was so intense, that it disturbed him with vain fears for their disappearance. Feeling within him, at times, the consciousness of possessing an original genius, — that it should depart from him, and that his lot should be cast among that of ordinary mortals, with good physical health and commonplace abilities, appeared to him the most awful calamity which fate could have in store for him. Of the excellent physical health which accompanied these unpleasant variations of his mental capacity, he speaks with an almost sardonic scorn, as one who, in the bitterness of being bereft of what is all in all to him, talks of some paltry trifle which fortune in her sarcastic malice has chosen to leave untouched. In short, the manner in which he speaks of the departure of his cunning, must almost necessarily convey to the reader a considerable portion of that ludicrous character which is always presented by a scene in which a man appears to be dreadfully anxious about the safety of that which either is of no importance, or is not in danger.

It may be a question whether this strange letter was ever sent to its destination, as the version from which it is here printed is not a rough draught, but a neatly written copy, such as might have been prepared for transmission. But this does not afford so full a presumption in Hume's case, as it would in that of the average of literary men, as he seems to have felt a sort of enjoyment in his earlier years in having his papers neatly written out. The first name that suggested itself as that of the person to whom the paper was addressed was Arbuthnot, whose fine genius was just then flickering in the socket. But a more full consideration showed to my satisfaction that it must have been destined for Dr. George Cheyne,

and that it was suggested by that eminent physician's publication, in the preceding year, of "The English Malady; or, a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all kinds, as Spleen, Vapours, Lowness of Spirits, Hypochondriacal Distempers, &c." There is a certain unison of tone between Hume's letter and this book, that, added to other coincidences, strongly impresses on the mind their connexion with each other; and though it is perhaps necessary, before this is fully seen, to enter into the whole tenor and tone of Cheyne's book, the reader will perhaps find the following passage sufficient to render the conjecture probable: —

"It is a common observation, (and I think has great probability on its side,) that fools, weak or stupid persons, heavy and dull souls, are seldom much troubled with vapours or lowness of spirits. The intellectual faculty, without all manner of doubt, has material and animal organs, by which it mediately works, as well as the animal functions. What they are, and how they operate, as I believe very few know, so it is very little necessary to know them for my present purpose. As a philosophical musician may understand proportions and harmony, and yet never be in a condition to gratify a company with a fine piece of music, without the benefit of sounds from proper organs, so the intellectual operations (as long as the present union between soul and body lasts) can never be performed in the best manner without proper instruments. The works of imagination and memory, of study, thinking, and reflecting, from whatever source the principle on which they depend springs, must necessarily require bodily organs. Some have these organs finer, quicker, more agile, and sensible, and perhaps more numerous than others; brute animals have few or none, at least none that belong to reflec-

tion; vegetables certainly none at all. There is no account to be given how a disease, a fall, a blow, a debauch, poisons, violent passions, astral and aerial influences, much application, and the like, should possibly alter or destroy these intellectual operations without this supposition. It is evident, that in nervous distempers, and a great many other bodily diseases, these faculties and their operations are impaired, nay, totally ruined and extinguished to all appearance; and yet, by proper remedies, and after recovery of health, they are restored and brought to their former state. Now, since this present age has made efforts to go beyond former times, in all the arts of ingenuity, invention, study, learning, and all the contemplative and sedentary professions, (I speak only here of our own nation, our own times, and of the better sort, whose chief employments and studies these are,) the organs of these faculties being thereby worn and spoiled, must affect and deaden the whole system, and lay a foundation for the diseases of lowness and weakness. Add to this, that those who are likeliest to excel and apply in this manner, are most capable and most in hazard of following that way of life which I have mentioned, as the likeliest to produce these diseases. Great wits are generally great epicures, at least, men of taste. And the bodies and constitutions of one generation are still more corrupt, infirm, and diseased, than those of the former, as they advance in time and the use of the causes assigned."

Then there are the farther coincidences, that Cheyne was a Scotsman, that he was an eminent man in his profession, and that he had bestowed some attention on mental philosophy. "I passed my youth," he tells us, "in close study, and almost constant application to the abstracted sciences, wherein my chief pleasure

consisted." "Having," he elsewhere says, "had a liberal education, with the instruction and example of pious parents, (who at first had designed me for the church,) I had preserved a firm persuasion of the great and fundamental principles of all virtue and morality: viz. the existence of a supreme and infinitely perfect Being, the freedom of the will, the immortality of the spirits of all intellectual beings, and the certainty of future rewards or punishments. These doctrines I had examined carefully, and had been confirmed in, from abstracted reasonings, as well as from the best natural philosophy, and some clearer knowledge of the material system of the world in general, and the wisdom, fitness, and beautiful contrivance of particular things animated and inanimated; so that the truth and necessity of these principles was so riveted in me, (which may be seen by the first edition of my 'Philosophical Principles,' published some years before that happened,[1]) as never after to be shaken in all my wanderings and follies."[2] It may

[1] Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion, 1705, 8vo.

[2] The English Malady, p. 330-331. I have run my eye over Cheyne's "Natural Method of Curing Diseases of the Body and Mind," 1742, 8vo,—the only work I am aware of his having published subsequently to the date of Hume's letter, but I have found in it no trace of a reference to Hume's case. Cheyne's works are perhaps better known to the public in general, than any medical books of the same period, and their curious discursive contents amply repay perusal. Their science is of course held to be completely superseded, but the unscientific reader cannot help thinking that there is much sagacious good counsel in his advice, notwithstanding the eccentric garrulity with which it is uttered. His account of his own experiences, in experimenting on himself, is the most interesting department of his medical observations. He describes every thing with a sort of rude eloquence, infinitely more pleasing to an ordinary reader than scientific precision; and the recklessness with which he appears to have submitted his own carcass to the most violent changes of regimen, inclines one to

be mentioned also, as a circumstance likely to bring Cheyne's work early under Hume's observation, that it contains a long statement of the case of Dr. William

think that he had applied towards it the *fiat experimentum in compore vili.* He tells us that he was disposed to "corpulence by the whole race of one side" of his family. In the quotation given above, he represents himself as having been studious in his youth. He began to practise his profession in London, of which he says—"The number of fires, sulphurous and bituminous; the vast expense of tallow and fœtid oil in candles and lamps, under and above ground; the clouds of stinking breaths and perspiration, not to mention the ordure of so many diseased, both intelligent and unintelligent animals; the crowded churches, churchyards, and burying places, with putrifying bodies, the sinks, butcher houses, stables, dunghills, and the necessary stagnation, fermentation, and mixture of all variety of all kinds of atoms, are more than sufficient to putrify, poison, and infect the air, for twenty miles round it." Having come from the fresh air of the country into so hopeful an atmosphere, he seems to have resolved that his habit of living should be an equally great contrast to his previous studious abstinence. "Upon my coming to London, I all of a sudden changed my whole manner of living. I found the bottle-companions, the younger gentry, and free-livers, to be the most easy of access, and most quickly susceptible of friendship and acquaintance,—nothing being necessary for that purpose but to be able to eat lustily, and swallow down much liquor; and being naturally of a large size, a cheerful temper, and tolerable lively imagination; and having, in my country retirement, laid in store of ideas and facts,—by these qualifications I soon became caressed by them, and grew daily in bulk, and in friendship with these gay gentlemen and their acquaintances. I was tempted to continue this course, no doubt, from a liking, as well as to force a trade, which method I had observed to succeed with some others: and thus constantly dining and supping in taverns, and in the houses of my acquaintances of taste and delicacy, my health was in a few years brought into great distress, by so sudden and violent a change. I grew excessively fat, short-breathed, lethargic, and listless."

The consequences were "a constant, violent headach, giddiness, lowness, anxiety, and terror," and he went about "like a malefactor condemned, or one who expected every moment to be crushed by a ponderous instrument of death hanging over his head." These

Cranstoun, an eminent medical man then residing at Jedburgh, in the same district of country with Nine-wells.

evil symptoms prompted him to abandon suppers and restrict himself to a small quantity of animal food and of fermented liquors. He very naturally found that on this abrupt change all his "bouncing, protesting, and undertaking companions" forsook him, and "dropped off like autumnal leaves," leaving him to vegetate in temperate dreariness, while they "retired to comfort themselves with a cheer-up cup," so that he pathetically tells us, "I was forced to retire into the country quite alone, being reduced to the state of Cardinal Wolsey, when he said, that if he had served his Maker as faithfully and warmly as he had his prince, he would not have forsaken him in that extremity."

It would be difficult to follow out the multitudinous course of remedies he adopted, commencing with "volatiles, foetids, bitters, chalybeats, and mineral waters," and how he took twenty grains of "what is called the prince's powder," and "had certainly perished under the operation, but for an over-dose of laudanum after it," having thus experienced something like the good fortune of the man of Thessaly who leaped into a quickset hedge. Under these circumstances he felt his body "melting away like a snow-ball in summer." Having tried the Bath waters, he appears to have somewhat revived, whereupon by increasing his quantity of "animal food and strong liquors," he was "heated so," that he "apprehended a hectic." His next change was to a milk diet, in which experiment he was confirmed by a visit to Dr. Taylor of Croydon, its apostle, whom he found "at home, at his full quart of cow's milk, which was all his dinner." He found in consequence of this change, that he "increased in spirits, strength, appetite and gaiety," until, the old Adam struggling within him, he "began to find a craving and insufferable longing for more solid and toothsome food, and for higher and stronger liquors." Hereupon we have him getting more generous in his diet, but still, as he counts it, "sober, moderate, and plain," in so far as he "drank not above a quart or three pints at most of wine any day." Under this regimen, he says, "I swelled to such an enormous size, that upon my last weighing I exceeded thirty-two stones." Then came fits of various kinds, and a dreary period of hypochondria, with recurrences to the low diet system, and then such startling revulsions from it as the following: "I resolved to change my half pint of port at dinner, into the

CHAPTER II.

1734—1739. ÆT. 23—27.

Hume leaves Bristol for France — Paris — Miracles at the Tomb of the Abbé Paris — Rheims — La Flêche — Associations with the Abbé Pluche and Des Cartes — Observations on French Society and Manners — Story of La Roche — Return to Britain. — Correspondence with Henry Home — Publication of the first and second volume of The Treatise of Human Nature — Character of that Work — Its Influence on mental Philosophy.

WE have no account of Hume's sojourn in Bristol, except his own very brief statement, that "in a few months," he "found that scene totally unsuitable" to him.[1] He must have proceeded to France about the middle of the year 1734, and he thus describes in his "own life," his motives and intentions. "I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my

same quantity of Florence. I ate, at the same time, a good deal of more butter with my vegetables, and plenty of old rich cheese; and likewise nuts extremely—I procured from abroad and at home, great plenty of all kinds, as filberts, walnuts, chestnuts, almonds, &c., eating them in great quantities after dinner by way of dessert," but in pity to the digestive sympathies of the reader this subject must be dropped. Dr. Cheyne is—not the martyr, but the hero of dyspepsia, and Mrs. Radcliffe could not have drawn him through a longer series of horrors than his inventive genius seems to have created for himself.

[1] A literary friend suggests that Hume has a quiet allusion to the intellectual faculties of the people of Bristol, in the description of James Naylor's attempts to personify our Saviour, where it is said, "he entered Bristol mounted on a horse—I suppose from the difficulty in that place of finding an ass." Retrospect of manners &c., at the end of the History of the Commonwealth.

deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature."

His subsequent letters show that he proceeded in the first instance to Paris, where he remained for a short time. Not long before his arrival there, some occurrences had taken place which were afterwards prominently referred to in his philosophical writings. A Jansenist, distinguished by his sanctity and the wide circle of his charities—the Abbé Paris, having died, a tomb was erected over his remains in the cemetery of St. Médard. Thither the poor, whom the good man had succoured in life, repaired to bless his memory and pray for the state of his soul. But it was discovered that this devotion was speedily rewarded; for the sick were cured, the blind saw, all manner of miracles were performed; and the evidence of their genuineness was considered so satisfactory, that the Jesuits were never able to impugn them — an instance which it might be well for every one to recall to mind who is told of phenomena out of the ordinary course of nature being authenticated by the testimony of respectable and enlightened people. At length, this series of miracles became offensive to the government — there was no saying how far the matter might proceed. It was resolved that there should be no more miracles performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris: the gates of the cemetery were closed, and the miracles necessarily came to an end. This occurred in the year 1732, just two years before Hume's visit; and it will easily be imagined that the references to these wonderful events which he would hear in conversation, suggested many trains of thought to the young philosopher. It was not long afterwards, and probably while all this

was very fresh in his memory, that the principal theory of his Essay on Miracles was suggested to him. In that Essay he says:

"Many of the miracles of Abbé Paris were proved immediately by witnesses before the officialty or bishop's court at Paris, under the eye of Cardinal Noailles, whose character for integrity and capacity was never contested even by his enemies.

"His successor in the archbishopric was an enemy to the Jansenists, and for that reason promoted to the see by the court. Yet twenty-two rectors or curés of Paris, with infinite earnestness, press him to examine those miracles, which they assert to be known to the whole world, and indisputably certain. But he wisely forbore."

And farther on:—

"No less a man than the Duc de Chatillon, a duke and peer of France, of the highest rank and family, gives evidence of a miraculous cure, performed upon a servant of his, who had lived several years in his house with a visible and palpable infirmity.

"I shall conclude with observing, that no clergy are more celebrated for strictness of life and manners than the secular clergy of France, particularly the rectors or curés of Paris, who bear testimony to these impostures."

An illustration of his notice of what was passing around him in Paris, occurs in the following passage in his "Natural History of Religion."

"I lodged once at Paris in the same hotel with an ambassador from Tunis, who, having passed some years at London, was returning home that way. One day I observed his Moorish excellency diverting himself under the porch, with surveying the splendid equipages that drove along; when there chanced to

pass that way some Capucin friars, who had never seen a Turk, as he, on his part, though accustomed to the European dresses, had never seen the grotesque figure of a Capucin: and there is no expressing the mutual admiration with which they inspired each other. Had the chaplain of the embassy entered into a dispute with these Franciscans, their reciprocal surprise had been of the same nature. Thus all mankind stand staring at one another; and there is no beating it into their heads, that the turban of the African is not just as good or as bad a fashion as the cowl of the European.—'He is a very honest man,' said the Prince of Sallee, speaking of De Ruyter; 'it is a pity he were a Christian.'"

After leaving Paris, he resided at Rheims in the province of Champagne, about eighty miles north-east of the metropolis. Thence he addressed to his friend Michael Ramsay the following letter, full of observation and thought.

Hume *to* Michael Ramsay.

"*Rheims, September* 12, 1734.

"My Dear Michael,—I suppose you have received two letters from me, dated at Paris, in one of which was enclosed a letter to my Lord Stair. I am now arrived at Rheims, which is to be the place of my abode for some considerable time, and where I hope both to spend my time happily for the present, and lay up a stock for the future. It is a large town, containing about forty thousand inhabitants, and has in it about thirty families that keep coaches, though, by the appearance of the houses, you would not think there was one. I am recommended to two of the best families in town, and particularly to a man, who

they say is one of the most learned in France.[1] He is just now in the country, so that I have not yet seen him; though, if I had seen him, it would be some time

[1] It is not improbable that the person here alluded to is the Abbé Pluche, a native of Rheims, the greatest literary ornament of that city, and one who filled no small place in the lettered aristocracy of France, where he held in many respects the position which Paley occupied in England. He filled successively the chairs of Humanity and Rhetoric, in the University of Rheims. His promotion in the Church was checked by his partiality for Jansenism. He had the rare merit of uniting to a firm belief in the great truths of Christianity a wide and full toleration for the conscientious opinions of others; and he enjoyed, what is no less rarely possessed by those who meddle in theological disputes, the good opinion of his opponents. He was a great scholar, and wrote some works on etymological and archæological subjects; but he is chiefly known for his writings on natural theology, celebrated for their clear and animated enunciation of the harmonies of nature, and not only popular in their own country, but translated into most of the European languages. His "Spectacle de la Nature," written in a series of dialogues, was sketched while he acted as instructor to the son of Lord Stafford; and the master and pupil, with the father and mother of the latter, are the interlocutors. One of its main objects is, by tracing effects in the operations of nature to their causes, to prove and illustrate the beneficence and wisdom of the Deity. This work has been a treasure to many an English schoolboy, in its well-known translation, with the title, "Nature Displayed." An answer by Pluche to some *esprits forts*, who wondered why a philosopher could believe so much, has been preserved by his contemporaries: "It is more reasonable," he said, "to believe in the dictates of the Supreme Being than to follow the feeble lights of a reason bounded in its operations and subject to error."

It must be granted that what Hume calls the association of contrariety has in some measure caused this digression, and that the Abbé Pluche would not have been so amply discussed as the possible learned man that Hume had an introduction to, had there not been so much that is common in the subjects treated of by both, and so much that is contrasted in the mode of treatment. Pluche was an opponent of Des Cartes, and thus a name far greater than his, and as many will hold greater than Hume's, is introduced into the circle of these local associations.

before I could contract a friendship with him, not being yet sufficient master of the language to support a conversation; which is a great vexation to me, but which I hope in a short time to get over. As I have little more than this to say about business, I shall use the freedom to entertain you with any idle thoughts that come into my head, hoping at least you will excuse them, if not be pleased with them, because they come from an absent friend.

"When I parted from Paris, the Chevalier Ramsay gave me as his advice, to observe carefully, and imitate as much as possible, the manners of the French. For, says he, though the English, perhaps, have more of the real politeness of the heart, yet the French certainly have the better way of expressing it. This gave me occasion to reflect upon the matter, and in my humble opinion it is just the contrary: viz., that the French have more real politeness, and the English the better method of expressing it. By real politeness I mean softness of temper, and a sincere inclination to oblige and be serviceable, which is very conspicuous in this nation, not only among the high but low; in so much that the porters and coachmen here are civil, and that, not only to gentlemen, but likewise among themselves; so that I have not yet seen one quarrel in France, though they are every where to be met with in England.[1] By the expressions of politeness, I

[1] The following passage in a recent work, Mrs. Shelley's "Rambles in Germany and Italy," seems appropriate to this observation: —

"By this time I became aware of a truth which had dawned on me before, that the French common people have lost much of that grace of manner which once distinguished them above all other people. More courteous than the Italians they could not be; but, while their manners were more artificial, they were more playful and winning. All this has changed. I did not remark the alteration so much with regard to myself, as in their mode of speaking

mean those outward deferences and ceremonies which custom has invented, to supply the defect of real politeness or kindness, that is unavoidable towards strangers, or indifferent persons, even in men of the best dispositions in the world. These ceremonies ought to be so contrived, as that, though they do not deceive nor pass for sincere, yet still they please by their appearance, and lead the mind by its own consent and knowledge into an agreeable delusion. One may err by running into either of the two extremes; that of making them too like truth or too remote from it: though we may observe, that the first is scarce possible, because whenever any expression or action becomes customary, it can deceive nobody. Thus, when the Quakers say, 'your friend,' they are as easily understood, as another, that says, 'your humble servant.' The French err in the contrary extreme, that of making their civilities too remote from truth,

to one another. The 'Madame,' and 'Monsieur,' with which stable boys, and old beggar women, used to address each other with the deference of courtiers, has vanished. No trace of it is to be found in France; a shadow faintly exists among the Parisian shopkeepers when speaking to their customers, but only there is the traditional phraseology still used: The courteous accent, the soft manner, erst so charming, exists no longer. I speak of a thing known and acknowledged by the French themselves. . . .

. . Their phraseology, once so delicately and even to us more straightforward people, amusingly deferential (not to superiors only, but toward one another,) is become blunt, and almost rude. The French allege several causes for this change, which they date from the Revolution of 1830: some say it arises from every citizen turning out as one of the national guard in his turn, so that they all get a *ton de garnison:* others attribute it to their imitation of the English. Of course, in the times of the *ancien regime*, the courtly tone found an echo and reflexion, from the royal anti-chambers down to the very ends of the kingdom. This has faded by degrees, till the Revolution of 1830 gave it the *coup-de-grâce*."

which is a fault, though they are not designed to be believed; just as it is a transgression of rules in a dramatic poet to mix any improbabilities with his fable, though 'tis certain that, in the representation, the scenes, lights, company, and a thousand other circumstances, make it impossible he can ever deceive.

"Another fault I find in the French manners, is that, like their clothes and furniture, they are too glaring. An English fine gentleman distinguishes himself from the rest of the world, by the whole tenor of his conversation, more than by any particular part of it; so that though you are sensible he excels, you are at a loss to tell in what, and have no remarkable civilities and compliments to pitch on as a proof of his politeness. These he so smooths over, that they pass for the common actions of life, and never put you to[1] trouble of returning thanks for them. The English politeness is always greatest where it appears least.

"After all, it must be confessed that the little niceties of French behaviour, though troublesome and impertinent, yet serve to polish the ordinary kind of people, and prevent rudeness and brutality. For in the same manner as soldiers are found to become more courageous in learning to hold their muskets within half an inch of a place appointed; and your devotees feel their devotion increase by the observance of trivial superstitions, as sprinkling, kneeling, crossing, &c.; so men insensibly soften towards each other in the practice of these ceremonies. The mind pleases itself by the progress it makes in such trifles, and while it is so supported, makes an easy transition to something more material. And I verily believe it is for this reason that you scarce ever meet with a clown or an ill-bred man in France.

[1] Sic in MS.

"You may perhaps wonder that I, who have stayed so short time in France, and who have confessed that I am not master of their language, should decide so positively of their manner. But you will please to observe, that it is with nations as with particular men, where one trifle frequently serves more to discover the character, than a whole train of considerable actions. Thus, when I compare our English phrase of 'humble servant,' which likewise we omit upon the least intimacy, with the French one of 'the honour of being your most humble servant,' which they never forget, —this, compared with other circumstances, lets me clearly see the different humours of the nations. This phrase, of the honour of doing or saying such a thing to you, goes so far, that my washing-woman to-day told me, that she hoped she would have the honour of serving me while I staid at Rheims; and what is still more absurd, it is said by people to those who are very much their inferiors.

"Before I conclude my letter, I must tell you that I hope you will excuse my rudeness, if I use the freedom (?)[1] to desire of you that, the next time you do me the honour of writing to me, you will be so good as to sit down a day before the post goes away; for I cannot help being afraid that, in your haste, you have omitted many things, which otherwise I would have had the honour and satisfaction of hearing from you. When you are so good as to condescend to write, please to direct so:—'A Monsieur—Monsieur David Hume, gentilhomme, Ecossois, chez Monsieur Mesier, au Peroquet verd, proche la porte au Ferron, Rheims.'"[2]

Hume states, in his "own life," that he passed

[1] This word is nearly obliterated. The passage appears to be a sort of caricatured pompous politeness. [2] MS. R.S.E.

"three years" very agreeably in France. We find from a letter to Principal Campbell,[1] that two of these years were spent at La Flêche, and that he had some communication with the members of the Jesuits' College there. He says, "It may perhaps amuse you to learn the first hint, which suggested to me that argument which you have so strenuously attacked. I was walking in the cloisters of the Jesuits' College of La Flêche, a town in which I passed two years of my youth, and engaged in a conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and learning, who was relating to me, and urging some nonsensical miracle performed lately in their convent, when I was tempted to dispute against him; and as my head was full of the topics of my Treatise of Human Nature, which I was at that time composing, this argument immediately occurred to me, and I thought it very much gravelled my companion; but at last he observed to me, that it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity, because it operated equally against the Gospel as the Catholic miracles;—which observation I thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer. I believe you will allow, that the freedom at least of this reasoning makes it somewhat extraordinary to have been the produce of a convent of Jesuits, though perhaps you may think the sophistry of it savours plainly of the place of its birth."

This same Jesuits' College of La Flêche, is familiar to the philosophical reader as the seminary in which Des Cartes was educated. The place which Hume had just left, has been seen to be associated with the birth and residence of a distinguished opponent of

[1] Dated 7th January, 1762, and written in relation to a copy of Campbell's "Dissertation on Miracles," sent to him by Dr. Blair.

the Cartesian theory. We now find him perfecting his work in that academic solitude, where Des Cartes himself was educated, and where he formed his theory of commencing with the doubt of previous dogmatic opinions, and framing for himself a new fabric of belief. The coincidence is surely worthy of reflective association, and it is perhaps not the least striking instance of Hume's unimaginative nature, that in none of his works, printed or manuscript, do we find an allusion to the circumstance, that while framing his own theories, he trod the same pavement that had upwards of a century earlier borne the weight of one whose fame and influence on human thought was so much of the same character as he himself panted to attain.

It is to Hume's early sojourn in France that we must assign the time and the scene of Mackenzie's pleasant fiction, called the "Story of La Roche," published in the Mirror of 1779. It is generally admitted that the writer's materials were merely the character and habits of the philosopher, and that there was no groundwork for the narrative in any incident that had actually occurred. But the story must be taken as the observations of an acute perception, and a finely adjusted taste, upon Hume's character; and our reliance on the accuracy of the picture is enhanced by the circumstance that Smith, deceived by its air of reality, expressed his wonder that Hume had never told him of the incident.[1]

[1] It may be said, that, as Mackenzie's description of Hume's character, this subject belongs to a later period of his life—the time when Mackenzie was acquainted with him. But Mackenzie intended it to be a true view of Hume's character as a young man; and it appears that it properly belongs to that chronological period to which its author assigned it.

The opening description is in these words:—

"More than forty years ago, an English philosopher, whose works have since been read and admired by all Europe, resided at a little town in France. Some disappointments in his native country had first driven him abroad, and he was afterwards induced to remain there, from having found in this retreat, where the connexions even of nature and language were avoided, a perfect seclusion and retirement, highly favourable to the development of abstract subjects, in which he excelled all the writers of his time.

"Perhaps in the structure of such a mind as Mr. ——'s, the fine and more delicate sensibilities are seldom known to have place; or, if originally implanted there, are in a great measure extinguished by the exertions of intense study and profound investigation. Hence the idea of philosophy and unfeelingness being united, has become proverbial; and, in common language, the former word is often used to express the latter. Our philosopher had been censured by some, as deficient in warmth and feeling: but the mildness of his manners has been allowed by all; and it is certain, that if he was not easily melted into compassion, it was at least not difficult to awaken his benevolence."

The impression of the actions of a kind, charitable, and tolerant disposition, conveyed by the circumstances of the narrative, cannot be represented without incorporating it in full; and it will probably be thought that one or two passing sketches of character, such as the above, are all that should be taken into a work like the present, from a book accessible to every reader. Thus, when the housekeeper comes with the account of the distresses of the poor protestant clergyman and his daughter:

"Her master laid aside the volume in his hand, and broke off the chain of ideas it had inspired. His night-gown was exchanged for a coat, and he followed his gouvernante to the sick man's apartment."

Again,—

"La Roche found a degree of simplicity and gentleness in his companion, which is not always annexed to the character of a learned or a wise man. His daughter, who was prepared to be afraid of him, was equally undeceived. She found in him nothing of that self-importance which superior parts, or great cultivation of them, is apt to confer. He talked of every thing but philosophy or religion; he seemed to enjoy every pleasure and amusement of ordinary life, and to be interested in the most common topics of discourse: when his knowledge or learning at any time appeared, it was delivered with the utmost plainness, and without the least shadow of dogmatism."

And not less distinctly are the following sentences the echo of Mackenzie's own observations of the character and habits of the philosopher, that they are put in the varied shape of dialogue and narrative.

"You regret, my friend," said [La Roche,] "when my daughter and I talk of the exquisite pleasure derived from music, you regret your want of musical powers and musical feelings; it is a department of soul, you say, which nature has almost denied you, which, from the effects you see it have on others, you are sure must be highly delightful. Why should not the same thing be said of religion? Trust me, I feel it in the same way, an energy, an inspiration, which I would not lose for all the blessings of sense or enjoyments of the world. . . . . And it would have been inhuman in our philosopher to have clouded, even with a doubt, the sunshine of this belief.

"His discourse was very remote from metaphysical disquisition or religious controversy. Of all men I ever knew, his ordinary conversation was the least tinctured with pedantry or liable to dissertation. With La Roche and his daughter it was perfectly familiar. The country round them, the manners of the villagers, the comparison of both with those of England, remarks on the works of favourite authors, or the sentiments they conveyed, and the passions they excited, with many other topics in which there was an equality, or alternate advantage among the speakers, were the subjects they talked on."

Nor can one, after having quoted so much, avoid giving the concluding sentence, in which the philosopher contemplates the old clergyman's grief for the loss of his daughter, and at the same time that he perceives its bitterness and intensity, is made aware of the consolations which the bereaved old man finds in religion, and "rejoices that such consolation" is his.

"Mr. ——'s heart was smitten; and I have heard him long after confess, that there were moments when the remembrance overcame him even to weakness; when, amidst all the pleasures of philosophical discovery, and the pride of literary fame, he recalled to his mind the venerable figure of the good La Roche, and wished that he had never doubted."

The account of his sojourn in France is thus given in his "own life:" — "During my retreat in France, first at Rheims, but chiefly at La Flêche, in Anjou, I composed my 'Treatise of Human Nature.' After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737."

We must now follow him to London, where we find him occupied in carrying his "Treatise of Human Nature," through the press. One of his early friends

was his namesake Henry Home, afterwards Lord Kames, who pursued, but with unequal step, the same path with himself. Home was fifteen years the elder of the two, and had joined the bar in 1723. He had already published some of his professional works; but it was at a subsequent period of his life, and when he perhaps became emulous of the fame of his friend, that he attempted works in ethics, metaphysics, and criticism. During many years of continued intimacy, these two distinguished men enjoyed each other's mutual respect; but, in their early intercouse, when his senior had for some time occupied a prominent position in the eye of the public, we naturally find Hume writing about his great project in a tone of modest deference.

HUME *to* HENRY HOME.

"*London, December* 2, 1737.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry I am not able to satisfy your curiosity by giving you some general notion of the plan upon which I proceed. But my opinions are so new, and even some terms I am obliged to make use of, that I could not propose, by any abridgment, to give my system an air of likelihood, or so much as make it intelligible. It is a thing I have in vain attempted already, at a gentleman's request in this place, who thought it would help him to comprehend and judge of my notions, if he saw them all at once before him. I have had a greater desire of communicating to you the plan of the whole, that I believe it will not appear in public before the beginning of next winter. For, besides that it would be difficult to have it printed before the rising of the parliament, I must confess I am not ill pleased with a little delay, that it may appear with as few

imperfections as possible. I have been here near three months, always within a week of agreeing with my printers; and you may imagine I did not forget the work itself during that time, where I began to feel some passages weaker for the style and diction than I could have wished. The nearness and greatness of the event roused up my attention, and made me more difficult to please, than when I was alone in perfect tranquillity in France. But here I must tell you one of my foibles. I have a great inclination to go down to Scotland this spring to see my friends; and have your advice concerning my philosophical discoveries; but cannot overcome a certain shamefacedness I have to appear among you at my years, without having yet a settlement, or so much as attempted any. How happens it that we philosophers cannot as heartily despise the world as it despises us? I think in my conscience the contempt were as well founded on our side as on the other.

"Having a franked letter, I was resolved to make use of it; and accordingly enclose some '*Reasonings concerning Miracles*,'[1] which I once thought of publishing with the rest, but which I am afraid will give too much offence, even as the world is disposed at present. There is something in the turn of thought, and a good deal in the turn of expression, which will not perhaps appear so proper, for want of knowing the context: but the force of the argument you'll be judge of, as it stands. Tell me your thoughts of it. Is not the style too diffuse? though, as that was a popular argument, I have spread it out much more than the other parts of the work. I beg of you to

[1] See above, p. 50. These reasonings appeared probably in a shape more consonant with the author's later views in the "Philosophical Essays," 1748.

show it to nobody, except to Mr. Hamilton, if he pleases; and let me know at your leisure that you have received it, read it, and burnt it. Your thoughts and mine agree with respect to Dr. Butler, and I would be glad to be introduced to him. I am at present castrating my work, that is, cutting off its nobler parts; that is, endeavouring it shall give as little offence as possible, before which, I could not pretend to put it into the Doctor's hands. This is a piece of cowardice, for which I blame myself, though I believe none of my friends will blame me. But I was resolved not to be an enthusiast in philosophy, while I was blaming other enthusiasms. If ever I indulge myself in any, 'twill be when I tell you that I am, dear Sir, yours."[1]

Butler, to whom Hume is thus found desiring an introduction, had, in the immediately preceding year, published "The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature;" and it appears that Hume courted the attention of the author of that clear logical work to those speculations of his own, which, in the opinion of the world in general, have so opposite a tendency to that of the "Analogy." The following letter, acknowledging an introduction from Home, and dated 4th March, 1738, tells its own tale.

"I shall not trouble you with any formal compliments or thanks, which would be but an ill return for the kindness you have done me in writing in my behalf, to one you are so little acquainted with as Dr. Butler; and, I am afraid, stretching the truth in favour of a friend. I have called upon the Doctor,

[1] Tytler, Life of Kames, i. 84.

with a design of delivering him your letter, but find he is at present in the country. I am a little anxious to have the Doctor's opinion. My own I dare not trust to; both because it concerns myself, and because it is so variable, that I know not how to fix it. Sometimes it elevates me above the clouds; at other times, it depresses me with doubts and fears; so that, whatever be my success, I cannot be entirely disappointed. Somebody has told me that you might perhaps be in London this spring. I should esteem this a very lucky event; and notwithstanding all the pleasures of the town, I would certainly engage you to pass some philosophical evenings with me, and either correct my judgment, where you differ from me, or confirm it where we agree. I believe I have some need of the one, as well as the other; and though the propensity to diffidence be an error on the better side, yet 'tis an error, and dangerous as well as disagreeable.—I am, &c.

"I lodge at present in the Rainbow Coffeehouse, Lancaster Court." [1]

The transactions between authors and booksellers are seldom accompanied by any formidable array of legal formalities; but Hume and his publishers seem to have thought it necessary to bind each other in the most stringent manner, to the performance of their respective obligations, by "articles of agreement, made, concluded, and agreed, upon the 26th day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, and in the twelfth year of the reign of our sovereign lord King George the Second,—between David Hume of Lancaster Court of the one part, and John Noone of Cheapside,

[1] Tytler, Life of Kames, i. 88.

London, bookseller, of the other part." By this very precise document, it is provided, that "the said David Hume shall and will permit and suffer the said John Noone to have, hold, and enjoy, the sole property, benefit, and advantage of printing and publishing the first edition of the said book, not exceeding one thousand copies thereof." The author, in return, receives £50, and twelve bound copies of the book.[1] The transaction is on the whole creditable to the discernment and liberality of Mr. Noone. It may be questioned, whether, in this age, when knowledge has spread so much wider, and money is so much less valuable, it would be easy to find a bookseller, who, on the ground of its internal merits, would give £50 for an edition of a new metaphysical work, by an unknown and young author, born and brought up in a remote part of the empire. These articles refer to the first and second of the three volumes of the "Treatise of Human Nature;" and they were accordingly published in January, 1739. They include "Book I. Of the Understanding," and "Book II. Of the Passions."

It has been generally and justly remarked, that the Treatise is among the least systematic of philosophical works—that it has neither a definite and comprehensive plan, nor a logical arrangement. It was, indeed, so utterly deficient in the former—there was so complete a want of any projected scope of subject which the author was bound to exhaust in what he wrote—that an attempt to divide and subdivide the matter after it had been written, according to a logical arrangement, would only, as a sort of *experimentum crucis*, have exposed the imperfect character of the original plan. The author, therefore,

[1] Original MS. R.S.E.

very discreetly allowed his matter to be arranged as the subjects of which he treated had respectively suggested themselves, and bestowed on his work a title rather general than comprehensive,—a title, of which all that can be said of its aptness to the subject is, that no part of his book can be said to be wholly without it, while he might have included an almost incalculable multitude of other subjects within it. He called it simply "A Treatise of Human Nature;" and by a subsidiary title, explanatory rather of his method than definitive of his matter, he called it "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects."

The purely metaphysical,[1] and, at the same time, the most original portion of the work, and that which has most conspicuously rendered itself a constituent part of the literature of intellectual philosophy, is "Book I. Of the Understanding." "Book II. Of the Passions," contains mixed metaphysics and ethics, with occasional notices of phenomena, which, though Hume does not, other writers would be likely to connect with physiological inquiries. The third book, "Of Virtue and Vice in General," published a year later, is of an ethical character, being an inquiry into the origin and proper system of morals, and an application of the system to government and politics.

[1] According to some acceptations of the word metaphysical, which seem to make it synonymous with transcendental, and referable solely to the operations of pure reason, to the rejection of whatever is founded on experiment, none of Hume's works are properly metaphysical, and by the very foundation he has given to his philosophy, he has made it empirical and consequently not metaphysical. The word metaphysical is, however, here used in its ordinary, and, as it may be termed, popular acceptation, and as applicable to any attempt to analyze mind or describe its elements, — a subject in relation to which the word ontology is also sometimes used.

The "Treatise of Human Nature" afforded materials for the criticism of two very distinct classes of writers. The one consisted of men imbued with a spirit of inquiry kindred to that of Hume, and a genius capable of appreciating his services in the cause of truth; who, as the teachers of systems of which they were themselves the architects, had to attack or to defend the principles promulgated in the Treatise, according as these differed from or corresponded with their own. It is in the writings of these men that the true immortality of Hume as a philosopher consists. Whether they find in him great truths to acknowledge, or subtle and plausible errors to attack, they are the vital evidence of the originality of his work, of the genius that inspired it, and of its great influence on human thought and action. The other class of critics are those who, in pamphlets, or works more ambitious but not rising in real solidity above that fugitive class, or in occasional digressions from other topics, have endeavoured to prejudice the minds of their readers against the principles of the Treatise, by exaggeration, or by the misapplication of their metaphysical doctrines to the proceedings of every-day life,—a set of literary efforts of quick production and as quick decay.

To the former class of authors, it is of course not within the scope of the present writer's ambition to belong, and he sees no occasion to attempt to imitate the latter. In a work, however, which professes to give a life of David Hume, it is necessary to say something about the "Treatise of Human Nature;" and as a preliminary to such an attempt, it may be well to mark the boundaries within which the writer conceives that the duty he has assumed calls on him for a description of the work, neither impugning nor defending any of the opinions it sets forth.

It seems to be right that some attempt should be made to describe the character and strength of the author's intellect, and the method of its operations; and to give a view of the fundamental characteristic principles by which he professes to distinguish his own philosophy from that of other writers on metaphysical subjects. An attempt should also be made to tell in what respect Hume has made incidental suggestions which have either been admitted as new truths in metaphysics, or have, as original but perhaps fallacious suggestions, afforded to other thinkers the means of establishing truths. These being the general objects to be kept in view, there is no intention to take them in any precise order, or to exhaust them in remarks on this one work. To attempt an analysis of the work would be out of place. There can be no more repulsive matter for reading than condensed metaphysics; and probably there is nothing less instructive than those abridgments, which, necessarily suppressing the author's discursive arguments, appeal almost entirely to the memory. To seize on and give a descriptive rather than an analytical account of the prominent features of the system, will be the chief aim of these remarks. Moreover, the Treatise bears on subjects which are nearly all recalled in its author's subsequent works; and while there are some things in the critical history of Hume's opinions which may be appropriately viewed in connexion with his first publication, there are others which it may be more expedient to examine when he is found reconsidering the subjects in his later works; and again, others which may be viewed in a general attempt to describe the extent of his literary achievements.

The Treatise has been already spoken of as embracing two great objects, metaphysics and ethics; or three, if

politics be considered as distinct from ethics. The great leading principle of the metaphysical department, and a principle which is never lost sight of in any part of the book, is, that the materials on which intellect works are the *impressions* which represent immediate sensation, whether externally as by the senses, or internally as by the passions, and *ideas* which are the faint reflections of these impressions. Thus to speak colloquially, when I see a picture, or when I am angry with some one, there is an *impression;* but when I think about this picture in its absence, or call to recollection my subsided anger, what exists in either case is an *idea.* Hume looked from words to that which they signified, and he found that where they signified any thing, it must be found among the things that either are or have been impressions. The whole varied and complex system of intellectual machinery he found occupied in the representation, the combination, or the arrangement of these raw materials of intellectual matter. If I say I see an object, I give expression to the fact, that a certain impression is made on the retina of my eye. If I convey to the person I am speaking to an accurate notion of what I mean, I awaken in his mind ideas left there by previous impressions, brought thither by his sense of sight.[1] Thus, in the particular case of the external senses, when they are considered as in direct communication between the mind and any object, there are impressions: when the senses are not said

[1] The term "ideas," in the philosophical nomenclature of Hume, is thus used in a sense quite distinct from its previous current acceptations, and as different from its vernacular use by Plato, in reference to the archetypes of all the empirical objects of thought, as from its employment by Locke, who used it to express "whatsoever is the object of the understanding when a man thinks."

to be in communication with the object, the operations of the mind in connexion with it, are from vestiges which the impressions have left on the mind; and these vestiges are called ideas, and are always more faint than the original impressions themselves. And a material circumstance to be kept in view at the very threshold of the system is, that there is no specific and distinct line drawn between impressions and ideas. Their difference is in degree merely—the former are stronger, the latter weaker. There is no difference in kind; and there is sometimes doubt whether that which is supposed to be an impression may not be a vivid idea, and that which is supposed to be an idea a faint impression.

When Hume examined, with more and more minuteness, the elements of the materials on which the mind works, he could still find nothing but these impressions and ideas. Looking at language as a machinery for giving expression to thought, he thus established for himself a test of its adaptation to its right use, — a test for discovering whether in any given case it really served the purpose of language, or was a mere unmeaning sound. As he found that there was nothing on which thought could operate but the impressions received through sensation, or the ideas left by them, he considered that a word which had not a meaning to be found in either of these things, had no meaning at all. He looked upon ideas as the goods with which the mind was stored; and on these stores, as being of the character of impressions, while they were in the state of coming into the mind. When any one, then, in reasoning, or any other kind of literature, spoke of any thing as existing, the principle of his theory was, that this storehouse of idealized impressions should be searched for one corresponding to the term made use

of. If such an impression were not found, the word was, so far as our human faculties were concerned, an unmeaning one. Whether there was any existence corresponding to its meaning, no one could say: all that the sceptical philosopher could decide was, that, so far as human intellect was put in possession of materials for thought, it had nothing to warrant it in saying, that this word represented any thing of which that intellect had cognizance.

This limitation of the material put at the disposal of the mind, was largely illustrated in the course of the work; and the illustrations assumed some such character as this:—Imaginative writers present us with descriptions of things which never, within our own experience, have existed,—of things which, we believe, never have had existence. Yet, however fantastic and heterogeneous may be the representations thus presented to our notice, there is no one part, of which we form a conception, that is any thing more than a new arrangement of ideas that have been left in the mind by impressions deposited there by sensation. The most extravagant of eastern or classical fictions there find their elements. If it be a three-headed dog, a winged horse, a fiery dragon, or a golden palace, that is spoken of, the reader who forms a conception of the narrative puts it together with the ideas left in his mind by impressions conveyed through the external senses. If a spectre is said to be raised, it may be spoken of as not denser than the atmosphere, yet the attributes that bring a conception of it to the intellect are the form and proportions of a human being, — expression, action, and habiliments: all elements the ideas of which the mind has received through the impressions of the senses. If words were used in a book of fiction which did not admit of being thus realized by the

mind putting together a corresponding portion of the ideas stored up within it — supplying, as it were, the described costume from this wardrobe—then, according to Hume's philosophy, the word would be a sound without meaning. He maintained a like rule as to books of philosophy. If the authors used terms which were not thus represented in the storehouse of the matter of thought and language, they were not reasoning on what they knew; they were not using words as the signs of things signified, but printing unmeaning collections of letters, or uttering senseless sounds.

The system, if it were to be classed under the old metaphysical divisions, was one of nominalism. Such words as shape, colour, hardness, roughness, &c. the author of the Treatise could only admit to have a meaning in as far as they signified ideas in the mind; and these ideas could only be there as the relics of impressions derived through the senses. Thus, general terms, such as the categories of Aristotle, could have no existence except in so far as they represented and called up particulars. Of the abstract term colour, our notion is derived solely from the ideas left in the mind by the actual impressions made through the senses. Heat, cold, and largeness, so far as these words represent what is really in the mind, have no other foundation.

The application of this system to the mathematics, and to natural philosophy, was so startling as to afford to some readers almost a *reductio ad absurdum*. The infinite divisibility of matter was arraigned by Hume as so far from being a truth, that it was not even capable of being conceived by the mind, which had never yet received any impressions through the senses corresponding to the expression. Every man had seen matter divided—some into smaller fragments

than others; but where our ideas, derived from actual experiment, stopped in minuteness of division, the conception of divisibility stopped also. The truth of geometrical demonstration, as applicable to practice, he did not deny; but he maintained, or rather seemed to maintain, for his reasoning here is of a highly subtle order, that we have a conception of these operations only in as far as they concur with really existing things, or, more properly speaking, with the ideas in the mind conveyed thither by the senses. Of the point, which has no breadth, depth, or length; of the straight line, which is deficient in the first and second, and not in the last of these qualities, he denied that we could have an idea, unless that idea were just as much the representative of an actual existence as any other idea is.

Infinity of space was an expression to which he had an objection on similar grounds; it had no idea corresponding to it lodged in the mind. Of space finite in various quantities, the mind possessed ideas stored up from repeated impressions, and by adding these ideas together, more or less vastness in the conception of finite space was afforded. But any thing beyond this definitive increase, attested as it was by the senses, the mind had no means of conceiving. Whatever might be in another intellectual world, there was no idea corresponding to infinity of space in the mind of man. It thence followed, that space unoccupied was a conception of which the mind was incapable, because the impressions originally conveyed to the mind were the medium through which the conception of space existed, and where there were no ideas of such impressions, an aggregate idea of space was wanting. In the same manner it was held, that it was in a succession of impressions, with ideas corresponding, that

the conception of time consisted, and that without such a succession, time would be a thing unknown and unconceived. Our ideas of numbers he found to be but the collected ideas of the impressions of the units of which the senses have received distinct impressions; and in confirmation of this he appealed to the distinctness of our notion of small numbers, which our mind has been accustomed to find represented by units, and our imperfect conception of those large numbers, which we have never had presented to us in detail. How readily we have a notion of six, but how imperfectly the mind receives the conception of six millions; how clearly we perceive, in units, the difference between six and twelve, but how imperfect is our notion of the difference between six millions and twelve millions.[1]

[1] "If we take as the utmost bounds of this system the orbit Uranus, we shall find that it occupies a portion of space not less than three thousand six hundred millions of miles in extent. The mind fails to form an exact notion of a portion of space so immense; but some faint idea of it may be obtained from the fact, that, if the swiftest race-horse ever known, had begun to traverse it at full speed, at the time of the birth of Moses, he could only as yet have accomplished half his journey."—Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation, pp. 1–2. Here an attempt is made to give a conception of abstract numbers, by calling up in the mind the ideas deposited there from actual impressions. Hume had, in the application of his theory to mathematics, to struggle with the fact that no truths had a clearer and more distinct existence in the mind than the abstract truths of the exact sciences; and feeling the difficulty he thus had to encounter, he did not recur in his subsequent works to this part of the sceptical theory. Kant seems to have filled up the blank for him, by treating those truths as synthetical intuitions anterior to experience in their abstract existence, though depending on experience in the knowledge of their concrete application; but it may be observed, that at the beginning of sect. 4. of his Inquiry, Hume seems to have nearly anticipated some such principle.

All human consciousness being of these two materials, impressions and ideas, the answer to the question, What knowledge have we of an external world, resolved itself into this, that there were certain impressions and ideas which we supposed to relate to it—further we knew not. When we turn, according to this theory, from the external world, and, looking into ourselves, ask what certainty we have of separate self-existence, we find but a string of impressions and ideas, and we have no means of linking these together into any notion of a continuous existence. Such is that boasted thing the human intellect, when its elements are searched out by a rigid application of the sceptical philosophy of Hume. Not a thing separate and self-existent, which was, and is, and shall continue; but a succession of mere separate entities, called in one view impressions, in another ideas.[1]

It may make this brief sketch more clear, to notice a circumstance in the history of philosophy, which, perhaps, serves better in an incidental manner to mark the boundaries of the field of Hume's inquiry, than many pages of discursive description. The transcendentalists took him up as having examined the materials solely, on which pure reason operates;

[1] "If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives: since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations, succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea. . . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception."—Treatise, B. i. p. iv. sect. 6.

not pure reason itself. They said that he h[redacted] the classes of matter which come before the ju[redacted] had omitted to describe the judge himself, the extent of his jurisdiction, and his method of enforcing it. They maintained, that all these things, which with Hume appeared to be the constituent elements of philosophy, were nothing but the materials on which philosophy works,—that to presume them to be of service presupposed a reason which could make use of them,—that Hume himself, while thus speculating and telling us that his mind consisted but of a string of ideas, left behind by certain impressions, was himself making use of that pure reason which was in him before the ideas or impressions existed, and was through that power adapting the impressions and ideas to use. He characterized his system as "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects:" but they said that there was another and a preliminary matter of inquiry—the faculty, to speak popularly, which suggested what experiments should be made, and judged of their results.

Hume may be found indirectly lamenting the fate of his own work on metaphysics, in his remarks on other works of a kindred character; and in these criticisms we have a clue to the expectations he had formed. In his well-known rapid criticism on the literature of the epoch of the civil wars, he says of Hobbes: "No author in that age was more celebrated both abroad and at home than Hobbes. In our times, he is much neglected: a lively instance how precarious all reputations founded on reasoning and philosophy! A pleasant comedy which paints the manners of the age, and exposes a faithful picture of nature, is a durable work, and is transmitted to the latest posterity. But a system, whether physical or metaphysical, owes commonly its

its novelty; and is no sooner canvassed impartiality, than its weakness is discovered."

Like the majority of literary prophecies dictated by feeling and not by impartial criticism, this one, whether as it refers to "The Leviathan," of which it is ostensibly uttered, or to the "Treatise of Human Nature," the fate of which doubtless suggested it, has proved untrue. The influence of Hobbes has revived, as that of the Treatise remained undiminished from the time when it was first fully appreciated. And in both cases their influence has arisen from that element which seems alone to be capable of giving permanent value to metaphysical thought. It is not that in either case the fundamental theory of the author is adopted, as the disciples of old imbibed the system of their masters, but that each has started some novelties in thought, and, either by themselves sweeping away prevailing fallacies, or suggesting to others the means of doing so, have cleared the path of philosophy. As a general system, the philosophy of Hobbes has been perhaps most completely rejected at those times when its incidental discoveries and suggestions made it most serviceable to philosophy, and were the cause of its being most highly esteemed. "Harm I can do none," says Hobbes, when speaking of the metaphysicians who preceded him, "though I err not less than they, for I leave men but as they are, in doubt and dispute." There is indeed nothing in the later history of metaphysical writing to show that the triumphs in that department of thought are to stretch beyond the establishment of incidental truths, the removal of fallacies, and the suggestion of theories that may teach men to think. The field is a republic: incidental merit has its praise, and is allowed its pre-eminence; but no one mind, it may safely be pronounced, holds

in it that monarchical sway which Adam Smith retains over the empire of political economy. The ancient systems anterior to Christianity allowed of such empire. The pupil did not follow his master merely in this and that incidental truth developed, but adopted the system in all its details and proportions as his system and his creed. In later times it would probably be found that the most devoted admirers of great writers on metaphysics do not adopt their opinions in the mass; and it seems that men must now go elsewhere than to the produce of human reason, for the grand leading principles of the philosophy of belief and disbelief.

To those who hold that the writings of the great metaphysicians are thus to be esteemed on account, not of their fundamental principles, but of the truths they bring out in detail, a new theory is like a new road through an unfrequented country, valuable, not for itself, but for the scenery which it opens up to the traveller's eye. The thinker who adopts this view, often wonders at the small beginnings of philosophical systems—wonders, perhaps, at the circumstance of Kant having believed that his own system started into life at one moment as he was reading Hume's views of Cause and Effect. But the solution is ready at hand. We feel that the philosopher of Königsberg had in his mind the impulses that would have driven him into a new path had no Hume preceded him. We owe it to the Essay on Cause and Effect that it was the starting-point at which he left the beaten track; but, had it not attracted his attention, his path would have been as original, though not, perhaps, in the same direction. And so of Hume himself. If the main outline of his theory had never occurred to him, he would still have been a great philosopher; for in some form or other he would have

found his way to those incidental and subsidiary discoveries, which are admitted to have reality in them by many who repudiate his general theory.

Of all the secondary applications of the leading principle of the Treatise, none has perhaps exercised so extensive an influence on philosophy, as this same doctrine of cause and effect. Looking to those separate phenomena, of which in common language we call the one the cause of the other, and the other the effect of that cause, he could see no other connexion between them than that the latter immediately followed the former. He found that the mind, proceeding on the inductive system, when it repeatedly saw two phenomena thus conjoined, expected, when that which had been in use to precede the other made its appearance, that the other would follow; and he found that by repeated experiment this expectation might be so far strengthened, that people were ready to stake their most important temporal interests on the occurrence of the phenomenon called the effect, when that called the cause had taken place. But if there were any thing else but this conjunction, of which a knowledge was demanded—if the unsatisfied investigator sought for some power in the one phenomenon which enabled it to be the fabricator of the other—the sceptical reasoner would answer, that for all he could say to the contrary such a thing might be, but he had no clue to that knowledge—no impression of any such quality passed into his intellect through sensation—his mind had no material committed to it by which the existence or non-existence of any such thing could be argued.

The vulgar notion of this theory was, that it destroyed all our notions of regularity and system in the order of nature; that it made no provision for

unseen causes, and contemplated only the application of the doctrines of cause and effect to things which were palpably seen following each other. But the inventor of the theory never questioned the regularity of the operations of nature as established by the inductive philosophy; he only endeavoured to show how far and within what limits we could acquire a cognizance of the machinery of that regularity. He denied not that when the spark was applied, the gunpowder would ignite, or that when the ball was dropped, it would proceed to the earth with the accelerated motion of gravitation; but he denied that we could see any other connexion between the cause and effect in either case, than that of uniform sequence. When it was scientifically adopted, the theory was found to be productive of the most important results. The view that when any effect was observed, that phenomenon which was most uniform in its precedence was the one entitled to be termed the cause, was a salutary incentive to close and patient investigation, by laying before the philosopher the simple, numerical question—what was that phenomenon which, by the uniformity of its precedence, was entitled to be termed the cause?[1] The test became of the simplest kind; and, if the experimentalist had at a particular time considered some phenomenon as a cause,—if the farther progress of patient and unprejudiced inquiry showed that

[1] One cannot escape a feeling of astonishment on finding so great a philosopher as Reid saying, (Active Powers, ch. ix.) that on this theory day and night might be called mutually the cause and effect of each other, on account of their mutual sequence: as if the observation of those who have gone so far in civilisation as just to have seen ignited bodies, had not data for concluding that that phenomenon which most uniformly preceded the ramification of rays of light, was the appearance of a luminous body.

another, by the occurrence of instances in which it preceded the effect while the former did not, had a preferable title to be termed the cause, the mind in its unbiassed estimate of numbers at once admitted the claim. But when, according to the antagonist system,[1] it became settled that any given phenomenon had in it the power of bringing into existence another, that power was viewed as a quality of the object. When things are admitted to have qualities, it is not easy for the mind at once to assent to their non-existence and to admit that others have the proper title to these qualities. Analogy, the great source of fallacies, comes to increase the difficulty, by a confusion of what are termed the qualities of bodies, and those endowments with which we invest our fellow-creatures. In this respect Hume's theory of cause and effect has been of great service to inductive philosophy.

It was an objection to it that it made no allowance for unseen causes; but it was part of its author's system, that the uniformity which our observation teaches us, proceeds unseen in those cases to which our observation cannot penetrate. It was part of the theory, that where there is a want of the absolute uniformity in the sequence of two phenomena, they are not respectively cause and effect. This principle is of vital importance in physical science. It is a notion with the vulgar, and one that sometimes perhaps lurks unseen in scientific operations, that the cause sometimes does not produce its effect by reason of some failure in the operating power. It is from a vague amplification of this heresy, that the popular

[1] This refers to the notion, which may now be termed obsolete, at least in philosophy, of an inherent power in the cause to produce the effect — not to Kant's theory, which does not appear to be inconsistent with the scientific application of Hume's.

notion of chance is derived. Hume's theory nips the bud of such a fallacy by denying, whenever there is a break in the sequence, that the phenomena which have in other instances followed each other, really are cause and effect. It is perhaps in the unscientific application of therapeutics, that the popular fallacy is most widely and most dangerously exemplified. The whole of the complexity of that wondrous science consists in the immediate causes and effects being unseen — in the phenomena immediately conjoined not being ascertained, but in attempts being made to estimate them through the connexion between those external causes to which the internal causes may have had the relation of effects, and those external effects of which these internal effects may have been the causes. The character of unseen causes was aptly illustrated by Hume himself, from the throwing of a die. The vulgar mind can see no cause and effect in the operation, because there is a series of causes and effects, which are hidden from the sight, in the interior of the box; but the philosopher knows not the less, that those laws of motion, which induction has established to him as truths, are taking place; and that there is no turn made by the die, which is not as much the effect of some cause, as the turning of the hands of a watch, or the parallel motion in a steam engine.

It is one of the peculiar features of the history of mental philosophy, that there is scarcely ever a new principle, associated with the name of a great author, but it is shown that it has been anticipated, in some oracular sentence, probably by an obscure writer. Joseph Glanvill is pretty well known as the author of "Saducismus Triumphatus," a vindication of the belief in witches and apparitions, which must have been perused by all the curious in this species of lore.

Glanvill was the author of various tracts on biblical subjects, but it was not generally known that he wrote a book on sceptical philosophy, called "Scepsis Scientifica, or, Confest Ignorance the Way to Science," until it was unearthed by the persevering inquiries of Mr. Hallam. In that book there is the passage, "all knowledge of causes is *deductive*, for we know none by simple intuition, but through the medium of their effects; so that we cannot conclude any thing to be the cause of another but from its continual accompanying it, for the causality itself is *insensible*."[1] This is an addition

[1] "Scepsis Scientifica; or, Confest Ignorance the Way to Science, in an essay of the vanity of dogmatizing and confident opinion." By Joseph Glanvill, M.A. 1665, 4to, p. 142. See this coincidence commented on in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, art. Scepticism. The style of Glanvill's work, in its rich variety of logical imagery and its powerful use of antithesis, is formed on that of Sir Thomas Browne, whose "Vulgar Errors" had been first published fifteen years earlier. That one who wrote a book so full of wisdom — so bold, original, and firm in its attacks on received fallacies, should also have been the champion of belief in witchcraft, in which his prototype, Sir Thomas Browne, was also a believer, is one of those inconsistencies in poor human nature, which elicit much wonder, but no explanation. The following passages from this curious and rare book are offered for the reader's amusement:—

"We conclude many things impossibilities, which yet are easie *feasables*. For by an unadvised transiliency, leaping from the effect to its remotest cause, we observe not the connexion through the interposal of more immediate causalities, which yet at last bring the extremes together without a miracle. And hereupon we hastily conclude that *impossible* which we see not in the proximate capacity of its *efficient*."—pp. 83-84.

"From this last-noted head ariseth that other of *joyning causes with irrelevant effects*, which either refer not at all unto them, or in a remoter capacity. Hence the Indian conceived so grossly of the *letter* that discovered his theft; and that other who thought the watch an *animal*. From hence grew the impostures of *charmes* and *amulets*, and other insignificant ceremonies; which to this day impose upon common belief, as they did of old upon the *barbarism*

to the many instances where writers have almost, as it were by chance, laid down principles, of which

of the uncultivate *heathen*. Thus effects unusual, whose causes run under ground, and are more remote from ordinary discernment, are noted in the book of *vulgar opinion* with *digitus Dei*, or *Dæmonis;* though they owe no other dependence to the *first* than what is common to the whole *syntax* of beings, nor yet any more to the *second* than what is given it by the imagination of those unqualified judges. Thus, every unwonted *meteor* is portentous; and the appearance of any unobserved *star*, some divine *prognostick*. Antiquity thought *thunder* the immediate voyce of *Jupiter*, and impleaded them of impiety that referred it to natural causalities. Neither can there happen a *storm* at this remove from *antique* ignorance, but the multitude will have the *Devil* in it."—pp. 84-85.

On the Influence of Education.

"We judge all things by our *anticipations;* and condemn or applaud them, as they agree or differ from our *first receptions*. One country laughs at the *laws*, *customs*, and *opinions* of another as absurd and ridiculous; and the other is as charitable to them in its conceit of theirs."—pp. 93-94.

"Thus, like the hermite, we think the sun shines nowhere but in our cell, and all the world to be darkness but ourselves. We judge truth to be circumscribed by the confines of our belief, and the doctrines we were brought up in; and, with as ill manners as those of *China*, repute all the rest of the world *monoculous*. So that, what some astrologers say of our *fortunes* and the passages of our lives, may, by the allowance of a metaphor, be said of our *opinions* — that they are written in our *stars*, being to the most as fatal as those involuntary occurrences, and as little in their power as the *placits* of *destiny*. We are bound to our country's *opinions* as to its *laws;* and an accustomed assent is tantamount to an infallible conclusion. He that offers to dissent shall be an *outlaw* in reputation; and the fears of guilty Cain shall be fulfilled on him— whoever meets him *shall slay him*."—pp. 95-96.

"We look with superstitious reverence upon the accounts of preterlapsed ages, and with a supercilious severity on the more deserving products of our own—a vanity which hath possessed all times as well as ours; and the *golden age* was never present. . . . We reverence gray-headed doctrines, though feeble, decrepit, and within a step of dust: and on this account maintain opinions which have nothing but our *charity* to uphold them."—p. 102.

they show, by neglecting to follow them to their legitimate conclusions, that they have not understood their full meaning; if it do not rather illustrate the view already noticed, that in metaphysics our assent is secured, not to general propositions as such, but to their particular applications; and that it is not in the laying down of first principles that important truths are exhibited to the world, but in those subsidiary expositions by which the discoverer endeavours to show their application.

The subsequent history of Hume's theory of Cause and Effect, is a marked illustration of the danger of bringing forward as an argument against theories purely metaphysical, the statement that they are dangerous to religion. It is difficult to see where there is a difference between adducing that argument in the sphere of natural philosophy, from which it has been long scouted by common consent, and bringing it forward as an answer to the theories of the metaphysician. In either case it is a threat, which, in the days of Galileo, bore the terror of corporal punishment, and in the present day carries the threat of unpopularity, to the person against whom it is used.[1] If any one should

[1] "Had I done but half as much as he [Hume] in labouring to subvert principles which ought ever to be held sacred, I know not whether the friends of truth would have granted me any indulgence, I am sure they ought not. Let me be treated with the lenity due to a good citizen no longer than I act as becomes one."—Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, &c. p. 20.

On this Priestley says, "Certainly the obvious construction of this passage is, that Mr. Hume ought not to be treated with the indulgence and lenity due to a good citizen, but ought to be punished as a bad one. And what is this but what a Bonner and a Gardiner might have put into the preamble of an order for his execution. . . I for my part am truly pleased with such publications as those of Mr. Hume, and I do not think it requires any great sagacity or strength of mind, to see that such writings must be of great service

suppose that he finds lurking in the speculations of some metaphysical writer, opinions from which it may be inferred that he is not possessed of the hopes and consolations of the Christian, humanity to the unhappy author should suggest that he ought rather to be pitied than condemned, and respect for the religious feelings of others should teach that there is no occasion to endeavour, by a laborious pleading, to demonstrate that a man who has said nothing against religion is in reality an enemy to Christianity. They are surely no enlightened friends to religion, who maintain that the suppression of inquiry as to the material or the immaterial world, is favourable to the cause of revealed truth. The blasphemer who raises his voice offensively and contentiously against what his fellow citizens hold sacred, invokes the public wrath, and is no just object of sympathy. The extent of his punishment is regretted only when, by its vindictive excess, it is liable to excite retaliatory attacks from the same quarter. But the speculative philosopher, who does not directly interfere with the religion of his neighbours, should be left to the peaceful pursuit of his inquiries; and those who, instead of meeting him by fair argument, cry out irreligion, and call in the mob to their aid, should reflect first, whether it is absolutely certain that they are right in their conclusion, that his inquiries, if carried out, would be inimical to religion—whether some mind more acute and philosophical than their own, may not either finally confute the sceptical philosopher's argument, or prove

to religion, natural and revealed. They have actually occasioned the subject to be more thoroughly canvassed, and consequently to be better understood than ever it was before, and thus *vice cotis fungintur*."[1]

[1] Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry, &c. Dr. Beattie's Essay, &c. and Dr. Oswald's Appeal, &c. 1774, pp. 191-193.

that it is not inimical to religion; and secondly, whether they are not likely to be themselves the greatest foes to religion, by holding that it requires such defence, and the practical blasphemers, by proclaiming that religion is in danger?

Kant, the most illustrious opponent of Hume, in allusion to those who have appealed against him to our religious feelings, asks, what the man is doing that we should meddle with him; says he is but trying the strength of human reason, and bids us leave him to combat with those who are giving him specimens of the fabric on which to try his skill—tells us to wait and see who will produce one too strong to be broken to pieces—and not cry treason, and appeal to the angry multitude, who are strangers to these refined reasonings, to rush in. Shall we ask reason to give us lights, and prescribe beforehand what they are to show us?[1] "The observation of human blindness and weakness," says Hume himself, "is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it." A solemn saying, and characteristic of one who has done more than any other man to show the feebleness of poor human reason, and to teach man that he is not all sufficient to himself.

Those revelations in astronomy and geology, the first glimmerings of which made the timid if not doubting friends of their cause tremble, have enlarged year by year in rapid progression; but revealed religion is not less firm on her throne; and many of those who held that Hume's theory of Cause and Effect was inimical to revelation, lived to see how startlingly that argument could be turned against themselves. It has been well observed by Dugald

[1] Critik der reinen Vernunft, (Methodenlehre,) 7th ed. p. 571.

Stewart, that this theory is the most effectual confutation of the gloomy materialism of Spinoza, "as it lays the axe to the very root from which Spinozism springs." "The cardinal principle," he says, "on which the whole of that system turns is, that all events, physical and moral, are *necessarily* linked together as causes and effects; from which principle all the most alarming conclusions adopted by Spinoza follow as unavoidable and manifest corollaries. But if it be true, as Mr. Hume contends, and as most philosophers now admit, that physical causes and effects are known to us merely as *antecedents* and *consequents;* still more if it be true that the word *necessity*, as employed in this discussion, is altogether unmeaning and insignificant, the whole system of Spinoza is nothing better than a rope of sand, and the very proposition which it professes to demonstrate is incomprehensible by our faculties."[1]

It will be remembered how signally, in the question in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as to Sir John Leslie's professorship, the argument of irreligion was retaliated; and it was shown that, in the theory of an existing machinery in nature enabling the universe to proceed in its regular course, the cause having within it the adequate power for producing its effect, the omnipresence of a Deity was dispensed with, and there was substituted for the all-pervading influence of a superior wisdom, a mere material machine, having within itself the elements of its own regular motion. Thus, in instances where writers have claimed credit for having aided the cause of religion by carrying out the principles of natural theology, this merit has in many cases, and among certain classes of devout religious thinkers,

[1] Preliminary Dissertation to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 210.

been sternly denied them; and it has been said that their labours are rather adverse than favourable to revealed religion, because, through their tendency to make people believe in an established order in nature, by which causes produce their effects according to a fixed system, they have the effect of making mankind forget the existence of a revealed, omnipresent Deity, whose all-competent superintendence regulates the world, and they supply a religion independent of the religion of revelation.

Perhaps in this little history we may find an illustration of the view, that the greatest service which the Treatise has done to philosophy is that purely incidental one of teaching human reason its own weakness—of showing how easily the noblest fabric of human thought may be undermined, by a destroying agency of power not greater than that of the constructive genius which has raised it. In this respect it has done to philosophy the invaluable service of teaching philosophers their own fallibility. In all the departments of thought, and not only in the world of thought, but in that of action, the spirit of human infallibility is the greatest obstacle to truth and goodness. Whether it appear to protect a system which the thinker has framed for himself, or assume the more modest shape of maintaining, that among conflicting systems he has made choice of that which is absolutely and certainly right, while all others which in any way differ from it are as absolutely and certainly wrong; this offspring of the pride of human intellect is an equally dangerous enemy of human improvement; and to have contributed to its downfal is of itself no small achievement for one mind.

Such are a few remarks on the matter of the first

part of the "Treatise of Human Nature"—given not by any means as an analysis of the doctrines there taught, but merely as an attempt to characterize them by their prominent features. It will naturally be expected that a similar attempt should be made to characterize the form in which these doctrines were promulgated. As to the style of the Treatise, it possesses the clearness, flexibility, and simplicity that distinguish the maturity of its author's literary career, though not quite in all the perfection in which they afterwards attended his pen. There are occasional Scoticisms — a defect which he took infinite pains to cure; but of which he was never entirely rid. He uses a few obsolete and now harsh sounding forms of expression, from which he afterwards abstained: such as the elliptical combination 'tis, for it is. Here, and in the first editions of his History, he frequently neglects the increment on the perfect tense, as by saying, "I have forgot," instead of, I have forgotten; "I have wrote," instead of I have written.

The Treatise has that happy equality of flight, which distinguishes the author's maturer productions. There is no attempt to soar, and none of those ambitious inequalities which often deform the works of young authors. His imagination and language seem indeed to have been kept permanently chained down by the character of his inquiries. His constant aim is to make his meaning clear; and in the subtleties of a new and intricate system of metaphysics, he seems to have felt that there lay upon him so heavy a responsibility to make use on all occasions of the clearest and simplest words, that any flight of imagination or eloquence would be a dangerous experiment.

There is a corresponding absence of pedantic ornament. A young writer who has read much, is

generally more anxious to show his learning and information than his own power of thought. With many the defect lasts through maturer years, and they write as if to find a good thing in some unknown author, were more meritorious than to have invented it. Montesquieu, whom Hume has been accused of imitating, carried this defect to a vice, and often distorted the order of his reasoning, that he might introduce an allusion to something discovered in the course of his peculiar learning. That Hume had read much in philosophy before he undertook his great work, cannot be doubted, but he does not drag his readers through the minutiæ of his studies, and is content with giving them results. In many respects, indeed, one would have desired to know more of his appreciation of his predecessors. The name of Aristotle is, it is believed, not once mentioned in the work, and there are only some indirect allusions to him, and these not very respectful, in casual remarks on the opinions of the Peripatetics. One would have expected from Hume a kindred sympathy with the great master of intellectual philosophy, and a respectful appreciation of one whose inquiries were conducted with a like acute severity, but whose mind took so much more wide and comprehensive a grasp of the sources of human knowledge.

It has been often observed, that a person so original in his opinions as Hume, ought to have made a new nomenclature for the new things which he taught. But he has no philosophical nomenclature; he appears indeed to have despised that useful instrument of method, and means of communicating clear ideas to learners. This want has prevented his system from being clearly and fully learned by the student, while it has at the same time probably made his works less repulsive to the

general reader. He seems indeed hardly to have been conscious of the advantage to all philosophy, of uniformity of expression. Using the words "force," "vivacity," "solidity," "firmness," and "steadiness," all with the same meaning, he speaks of this usage as a "variety of terms which may seem so unphilosophical;" and then observes, more in the style of one who is tired of philosophical precision than of a philosopher, "Provided we agree about the thing, 'tis needless to dispute about the terms."

This is a kindred defect to that absence of method which has been already taken notice of. A fixed nomenclature is a beacon against repetition and discursiveness. But the Treatise has no pretension to be a work of which he who omits paying attention to any part, thereby drops a link in a chain, the loss of which will make the whole appear broken and inconsistent. There are, it is true, places where the essential parts of the author's philosophy are developed, the omission of which would render that which follows hard to be understood, but in general each department of the work is intelligible in itself. Its author appears to have composed it in separate fragments; holding in view, while he was writing each part, the general principle of his theory, but not taking it for granted that the reader is so far master of that principle, as not to require it to be generally explained in connexion with the particular matter under consideration. He seems indeed rather desirous to dwell on it, as something that the reader may have seen in the earlier part of the work, but may have neglected to keep in his mind while he reads the other parts. Perhaps the true model of every philosophical work is to be found in the usual systems of geometry, where, whatever is once proposed and proved, is held a

fixed part of knowledge, and is never repeated; but as far as psychological reasoning is from the certainty of geometrical, so distant perhaps, will ever be the precision of its method from that of geometry.

It may safely be pronounced, that no book of its age presents itself to us at this day, more completely free from exploded opinions in the physical sciences. With the exception perhaps of occasional allusions to "animal spirits," as a moving influence in the human body, the author's careful sifting sceptical mind seems, without having practically tested them, to have turned away from whatever doctrines were afterwards destined to fall before the test of experiment and induction. It was not that he was so much of a natural philosopher himself as to be able to test their truth or falsehood, but that with a wholesome jealousy, characteristic of the mind in which the Disquisition on Miracles was working itself into shape, he avoided them as things neither coming within the scope of his own analysis, nor bearing the marks of having been satisfactorily established by those whose more peculiar province it was to investigate their claims to be believed. At a later date, his friend D'Alembert admitted judicial astrology and alchemy as branches of natural philosophy in his "Systême Figuré des Connoissances Humaines." Cudworth, and even the scrutinizing Locke, dealt gravely with matters doomed afterwards to be ranked among popular superstitions, and Sir Thomas Browne, in some respects a sceptic, eloquently defended more "vulgar errors" than he exposed. Hobbes was, in the midst of the darkest scepticism, a practical believer in the actual presence of the spirits of the air; and Johnson, whose name, however, it may scarcely be fair to class in this list, as he did not profess, except for conversational triumph, to be a reducer

and demolisher of unfounded beliefs, along with his partial admission of the existence of spectres, has left behind him many dogmatic announcements of physical doctrines, which the progress of science has now long buried under its newer systems.

It is by no means maintained that Hume was beyond his age — or even on a par with its scientific ornaments, in physical knowledge; but merely that he showed a judicious caution in distinguishing, in his published work, those parts of physical philosophy which had been admitted within the bounds of true and permanent science, from those which were still in a state of mere hypothesis. His knowledge of physical science was probably not very extensive. A small portion of a collection of his notes on subjects that attracted his attention bear on this subject. The collection from which they are taken will be noticed in the next chapter; but as those which are set apart from the others, and are headed "Natural Philosophy," seem to have been written at an earlier period than the rest of the collection, and are appropriate to the present subject, they are here given. It is not expected that they will awaken in the natural philosopher any great respect for the extent of Hume's inquiries in this department of knowledge.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

"A ship sails always swiftest when her sides yield a little.

"Two pieces of timber, resting upon one another, will bear as much as both of them laid across at the distance of their opening.

"Calcined antimony more heavy than before.[1]

[1] A scientific friend observes, that this is the germ of the theory of oxidation.

"A proof that natural philosophy has no truth in it, is, that it has only succeeded in things remote, as the heavenly bodies; or minute, as light.

"'Tis probable that mineral waters are not formed by running over beds of minerals, but by imbibing the vapours which form these minerals, since we cannot make mineral waters with all the same qualities.

"Hot mineral waters come not a-boiling sooner than cold water.

"Hot iron put into cold water soon cools, but becomes hot again.

"There falls usually at Paris, in June, July, and August, as much rain as in the other nine months.

"This seems to be a strong presumption against medicines, that they are mostly disagreeable, and out of the common use of life. For the weak and uncertain operation of the common food, &c. is well known by experience. These others are the better objects of quackery."

The system of philosophy to which the foregoing remarks apply, was published when its author was twenty-six years old, and he completed it in voluntary exile, and in that isolation from the counsel and sympathy of early friends, which is implied by a residence in an obscure spot in a foreign country. While he was framing his metaphysical theory, Hume appears to have permitted no confidential adviser to have access to the workings of his inventive genius; and as little did he take for granted any of the reasonings and opinions of the illustrious dead, as seek counsel of the living. Nowhere is there a work of genius more completely authenticated, as the produce of the solitary labour of one mind; and when we reflect on the boldness and greatness of the undertaking, we have a

picture of self-reliance calculated to inspire both awe and respect. The system seems to be characteristic of a lonely mind — of one which, though it had no enmity with its fellows, had yet little sympathy with them. It has few of the features that characterize a partaker in the ordinary hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, of humanity; little to give impulse to the excitement of the enthusiast; nothing to dry the tear of the mourner. It exposes to poor human reason her own weakness and nakedness, and supplies her with no extrinsic support or protection. Such a work, coming from a man at the time of life when our sympathies with the world are strongest, and our anticipations brightest, would seem to indicate a mind rendered callous by hardship and disappointment. But it was not so with Hume. His coldness and isolation were in his theories alone; as a man he was frank, warm, and friendly. But the same impulses which gave him resolution to adopt so bold a step, seem at the same time to have armed him with a hard contempt for the opinions of the rest of mankind. Hence, though his philosophy is sceptical, his manner is frequently dogmatical, even to intolerance; and while illustrating the feebleness of all human reasoning, he seems as if he felt an innate infallibility in his own. He afterwards regretted this peculiarity; and in a letter, written apparently at an advanced period of life, we find him deprecating not only the tone of the Inquiry, but many of its opinions. He says:—

"Allow me to tell you, that I never asserted so absurd a proposition as *that any thing might arise without a cause*. I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration, but from another

source. *That Cæsar existed,* that there is such an island as Sicily, — for these propositions, I affirm, we have no demonstration nor intuitive proof,—would you infer that I deny their *truth,* or even their certainty? There are many different kinds of certainty; and some of them as satisfactory to the mind, though perhaps not so regular as the demonstrative kind.

"Where a man of sense mistakes my meaning, I own I am angry; but it is only with myself, for having expressed my meaning so ill, as to have given occasion to the mistake.

"That you may see I would no way scruple of owning my mistakes in argument, I shall acknowledge (what is infinitely more material) a very great mistake in conduct, viz. my publishing at all the 'Treatise of Human Nature,' a book which pretended to innovate in all the sublimest paths of philosophy, and which I composed before I was five-and-twenty; above all, the positive air which prevails in that book; and which may be imputed to the ardour of youth, so much displeases me, that I have not patience to review it. But what success the same doctrines, better illustrated and expressed, may meet with, *adhuc sub judice lis est.* The arguments have been laid before the world, and by some philosophical minds have been attended to. I am willing to be instructed by the public; though human life is so short, that I despair of ever seeing the decision. I wish I had always confined myself to the more easy parts of erudition; but you will excuse me from submitting to a proverbial decision, let it even be in Greek."[1]

[1] I have been favoured by Mr. Chambers with an old copy of this letter, in which it is titled as a letter to Gilbert Stuart. The original is among the MSS. R.S.E. where there is a note in Baron Hume's handwriting, with a supposition that it was addressed to Dr. Traill.

The reader, who passes from the first book of the Treatise, on "the Understanding," to the second, on "the Passions," will, in many instances, feel like one who is awakened from a dream, or as if, after penetrating in solitude and darkness into the unseen world of thought, he had come forth to the cheerful company of mankind, and were holding converse with a shrewd and penetrating observer of the passing world. As Hume was never totally insensible to the elements of social enjoyment, but had indeed an ample sympathy with the joys and sorrows of his fellow men, he appears occasionally, in the midst of his most subtle speculations, to experience a desire to burst from the dark prison of solitude, into which he had voluntarily immured himself, and bask in the sunshine of the world. "Man," he says, in his Treatise, "is the creature of the universe who has the most ardent desire of society, and is fitted for it by the most advantages. We can form no wish which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer. Every pleasure languishes when enjoyed apart from company, and every pain becomes more cruel and intolerable." In a remarkable passage, in which, after having long proceeded in enthusiasm with his solitary labours, he seems to have stopped for a moment, and recalling within himself the feelings and sympathies of an ordinary man, to have reflected on the scope and tendency of the system in which he was involving himself, he thus expresses himself, regarding its gloomy tendency, and the effect it has in destroying, in the mind of its fabricator, those stays of satisfactory belief in which it is so comfortable for the wearied intellect to find a resting-place:—

Before I launch out into those immense depths of philosophy which lie before me, I find myself inclined to stop a

moment in my present station, and to ponder that voyage which I have undertaken, and which undoubtedly requires the utmost art and industry to be brought to a happy conclusion. Methinks I am like a man, who, having struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escaped shipwreck in passing a small frith, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances. My memory of past errors and perplexities makes me diffident for the future. The wretched condition, weakness, and disorder of the faculties, I must employ in my inquiries, increase my apprehensions. And the impossibility of amending or correcting these faculties, reduces me almost to despair, and makes me resolve to perish on the barren rock, on which I am at present, rather than venture myself upon that boundless ocean which runs out into immensity. This sudden view of my danger strikes me with melancholy; and, as 'tis usual for that passion, above all others, to indulge itself, I cannot forbear feeding my despair with all those desponding reflections which the present subject furnishes me with in such abundance.

I am first affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude in which I am placed in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster, who, not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expelled all human commerce, and left utterly abandoned and disconsolate. Fain would I run into the crowd for shelter and warmth, but cannot prevail with myself to mix with such deformity. I call upon others to join me, in order to make a company apart, but no one will hearken to me. Every one keeps at a distance, and dreads that storm which beats upon me from every side. I have exposed myself to the enmity of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians; and can I wonder at the insults I must suffer? I have declared my disapprobation of their systems; and can I be surprised if they should express a hatred of mine and of my person? When I look abroad, I foresee on every side dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny, and detraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. All the world conspires to oppose and contradict me;

though such is my weakness, that I feel all my opinions loosen and fall of themselves, when unsupported by the approbation of others. Every step I take is with hesitation, and every new reflection makes me dread an error and absurdity in my reasoning.

For with what confidence can I venture upon such bold enterprises, when, beside those numberless infirmities peculiar to myself, I find so many which are common to human nature? Can I be sure that, in leaving all established opinions, I am following truth? and by what criterion shall I distinguish her, even if fortune should at last guide me on her footsteps? After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason why I should assent to it, and feel nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view under which they appear to me.[1]

Occasionally, seduced by some impulse of playful candour, we find him giving us admission as it were into the chamber of his thoughts, and desiring that some one would drag him into the common circle of the world: When there, he consents for a short time to comport himself as a man, is social and sympathetic with his kind, and pleased with what is passing around; when anon the ambition which had prompted his solitary musings stirs his soul, tells him that in active life and the world at large, the sphere of his true greatness is not placed, and prompts him to reimprison himself, and pursue the great aim of his existence.

But what have I here said, that reflections very refined and metaphysical have little or no influence upon us? This opinion I can scarce forbear retracting, and condemning from my present feeling and experience. The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my

[1] B. i. part iv. sect. 7.

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existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.

Most fortunately it happens, that since Reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, Nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther.

Here, then, I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life. But notwithstanding that my natural propensity, and the course of my animal spirits and passions reduce me to this indolent belief in the general maxims of the world, I still feel such remains of my former disposition, that I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and resolve never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy. For those are my sentiments in that splenetic humour which governs me at present. I may, nay I must yield to the current of nature, in submitting to my senses and understanding; and in this blind submission I show most perfectly my sceptical disposition and principles. But does it follow that I must strive against the current of nature, which leads me to indolence and pleasure; that I must seclude myself, in some measure, from the commerce and society of men, which is so agreeable; and that I must torture my brain with subtilties and sophistries, at the very time that I cannot satisfy myself concerning the reasonableness of so painful an application, nor have any tolerable prospect of arriving by its means at truth and certainty? Under what obligation do I

lie of making such an abuse of time? And to what end can it serve, either for the service of mankind, or for my own private interest? No: if I must be a fool, as all those who reason or believe any thing *certainly* are, my follies shall at least be natural and agreeable. Where I strive against my inclination, I shall have a good reason for my resistance; and will no more be led a-wandering into such dreary solitudes, and rough passages, as I have hitherto met with.

These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence; and indeed I must confess, that philosophy has nothing to oppose to them, and expects a victory more from the returns of a serious good-humoured disposition, than from the force of reason and conviction. In all the incidents of life, we ought still to preserve our scepticism. If we believe that fire warms, or water refreshes, 'tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise. Nay, if we are philosophers, it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination which we feel to the employing ourselves after that manner. Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us.

At the time, therefore, that I am tired with amusement and company, and have indulged a *reverie* in my chamber, or in a solitary walk by a river side, I feel my mind all collected within itself, and am naturally *inclined* to carry my view into all those subjects, about which I have met with so many disputes in the course of my reading and conversation. I cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations which actuate and govern me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of another; call one thing beautiful, and another deformed; decide concerning truth and falsehood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed. I am concerned for the condition of the learned world, which lies under such a deplorable ignorance in all these particulars. I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposi-

tion; and should I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I *feel* I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.[1]

The acuteness which the solitary metaphysician brought to his aid when he chose to contemplate mankind, is not the least interesting feature in his book. That he could have seen much of men, since his life had been but brief and his converse with books great, is not probable; yet Chesterfield and Rochefoucauld did not observe men more clearly and truly, though they may have done so more extensively. The following sketch of the mental features of a vain man, would not have been unworthy of Theophrastus.

Every thing belonging to a vain man is the best that is any where to be found. His houses, equipage, furniture, clothes, horses, hounds, excel all others in his conceit; and 'tis easy to observe, that from the least advantage in any of these, he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you'll believe him, has a finer flavour than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table more orderly; his servant more expert; the air in which he lives more healthful; the soil he cultivates more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier, and to greater perfection; such a thing is remarkable for its novelty; such another for its antiquity: this is the workmanship of a famous artist; that belonged to such a prince or great man; all objects, in a word, that are useful, beautiful, or surprising, or are related to such, may, by means of property, give rise to this passion. These agree in giving pleasure, and agree in nothing else. This alone is common to them, and therefore must be the quality that produces the passion, which is their common effect.[2]

[1] B. i. part iv. sect. 7.

[2] B. ii. part i. sect. 10.

CHAPTER III.

1739 — 1741. ÆT. 27 — 29.

Letters to his friends after the publication of the first and second volume of the Treatise — Returns to Scotland — Reception of his Book — Criticism in "The Works of the Learned" — Charge against Hume of assaulting the publisher — Correspondence with Francis Hutcheson — Seeks a situation — Connexion with Adam Smith — Publication of the third volume of the Treatise — Account of it — Hume's notes of his reading — Extracts from his Note books.

IMMEDIATELY after the publication of his work we find Hume thus writing to Henry Home :—

"*London, February* 13, 1739.

"SIR,—I thought to have wrote this from a place nearer you than London, but have been detained here by contrary winds, which have kept all Berwick ships from sailing. 'Tis now a fortnight since my book was published; and, besides many other considerations, I thought it would contribute very much to my tranquillity, and might spare me many mortifications, to be in the country while the success of the work was doubtful. I am afraid 'twill remain so very long. Those who are accustomed to reflect on such abstract subjects, are commonly full of prejudices; and those who are unprejudiced are unacquainted with metaphysical reasonings. My principles are also so remote from all the vulgar sentiments on the subject, that were they to take place, they would produce almost a total alteration in philosophy; and you know, revolutions of this kind are not easily brought about. I am young enough to see what will become of the

matter; but am apprehensive lest the chief reward I shall have for some time will be the pleasure of studying on such important subjects, and the approbation of a few judges. Among the rest, you may believe I aspire to your approbation; and next to that, to your free censure and criticism. I shall present you with a copy as soon as I come to Scotland; and hope your curiosity, as well as friendship, will make you take the pains of perusing it.

"If you know any body that is a judge, you would do me a sensible pleasure in engaging him to a serious perusal of the book. 'Tis so rare to meet with one that will take pains on a book, that does not come recommended by some great name or authority, that I must confess I am as fond of meeting with such a one as if I were sure of his approbation. I am, however, so doubtful in that particular, that I have endeavoured all I could to conceal my name; though I believe I have not been so cautious in this respect as I ought to have been.

"I have sent the Bishop of Bristol[1] a copy, but could not wait on him with your letter after he had arrived at that dignity. At least I thought it would be to no purpose after I began the printing. You'll excuse the frailty of an author in writing so long a letter about nothing but his own performances. Authors have this privilege in common with lovers; and founded on the same reason, that they are both besotted with a blind fondness of their object. I have been upon my guard against this frailty; but perhaps this has rather turned to my prejudice. The reflection on our caution is apt to give us a more implicit

[1] Dr. Butler was consecrated bishop, 3d December, 1739, and was afterwards translated to the see of Durham, 16th October, 1750. He died 16th June, 1752, in the 60th year of his age.

confidence afterwards, when we come to form a judgment. I am," &c.[1]

To the same year we must attribute a letter from Hume to Michael Ramsay, bearing no more precise date than 27th February. He says:—"As to myself, no alteration has happened to my fortune: nor have I taken the least step towards it. I hope things will be riper next winter; and I would not aim at any thing till I could judge of my success in my grand undertaking, and see upon what footing I shall stand in the world. I am afraid, however, that I shall not have any great success of a sudden. Such performances make their way very heavily at first, when they are not recommended by any great name or authority."

In the same letter he speaks of Ramsay as being then a tutor in the Marchmont family, and offers him this sage and business-like advice:—"Should a living fall to the gift of the Duchess of Marlborough, or any other of your friends and patrons, 'twould have but an ill air to say that the gentleman was in the South of France, and that he should be informed of the matter. Besides, you know how necessary a man's presence is to quicken his friends, to make them unite their interests, and to save them the trouble of contriving and thinking about his affairs. Many a one may endeavour to serve you when you point out the service you desire of them, who would not take the pains to find it out themselves."[2]

Early in the year 1739, desiring apparently to await in retirement the effect of his work on the mind of the public, he proceeded to Scotland, and took up

[1] Tytler's Life of Kames, i. 90.

[2] MS. R.S.E.

his residence at Ninewells, whence we find him writing to Henry Home on 1st June.

"DEAR SIR,—You see I am better than my word, having sent you two papers instead of one. I have hints for two or three more, which I shall execute at my leisure. I am not much in the humour of such compositions at present, having received news from London of the success of my Philosophy, which is but indifferent, if I may judge by the sale of the book, and if I may believe my bookseller. I am now out of humour with myself; but doubt not, in a little time, to be only out of humour with the world, like other unsuccessful authors. After all, I am sensible of my folly in entertaining any discontent, much more despair, upon this account, since I could not expect any better from such abstract reasoning; nor, indeed, did I promise myself much better. My fondness for what I imagined new discoveries, made me overlook all common rules of prudence; and, having enjoyed the usual satisfaction of projectors, 'tis but just I should meet with their disappointments. However, as 'tis observed with such sort of people, one project generally succeeds another, I doubt not but in a day or two I shall be as easy as ever, in hopes that truth will prevail at last over the indifference and opposition of the world.

"You see I might at present subscribe myself your most *humble* servant with great propriety: but, notwithstanding, shall presume to call myself your most affectionate friend as well as humble servant."[1]

His account of the success of his work in his "own

[1] Tytler's Life of Kames, i. 93.

life," is contained in these well-known sentences: "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my 'Treatise of Human Nature.' It fell *dead born from the press*, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." But he was never easily satisfied with the success of his works; and we know that this one was not so entirely unnoticed by the periodical press, such as it then was, but that it called forth a long review in the number for November, 1739, of *The History of the Works of the Learned*, a periodical which may be said to have set the example in England, of systematic reviews of new books. This review is written with considerable spirit, and has a few pretty powerful strokes of sarcasm—as where, in relation to Hume's sceptical examination of the results of the demonstrations of the geometricians, the writer says, "I will have nothing to do in the quarrel; if they cannot maintain their demonstrations against his attacks, they may even perish." The paper is of considerable length, and it has throughout a tone of clamorous jeering and vulgar raillery that forcibly reminds one of the writings of Warburton. But it is the work of one who respects the adversary he has taken arms against; and, before leaving the subject, the writer makes a manly atonement for his wrath, saying of the Treatise,—"It bears, indeed, incontestable marks of a great capacity, of a soaring genius, but young and not yet thoroughly practised. The subject is vast and noble as any that can exercise the understanding; but it requires a very mature judgment to handle it as becomes its dignity and importance: the utmost prudence, tenderness, and delicacy are requisite to this desirable issue. Time and use may ripen these qualities in our author; and we shall probably have reason to consider this,

compared with his later productions, in the same light as we view the juvenile works of Milton, or the first manner of a Raphael or other celebrated painter."

Immediately after Hume's death, there appeared in *The London Review* the following account of the manner in which he had acknowledged the article in *The Works of the Learned:* "It does not appear our author had acquired, at this period of his life, that command over his passions of which he afterwards makes his boast. His disappointment at the public reception of his 'Essay on Human Nature,' had, indeed, a violent effect on his passions in a particular instance; it not having dropped so dead born from the press but that it was severely handled by the reviewers of those times, in a publication entitled *The Works of the Learned.* A circumstance this which so highly provoked our young philosopher, that he flew in a violent rage to demand satisfaction of Jacob Robinson, the publisher, whom he kept, during the paroxysm of his anger, at his sword's point, trembling behind the counter lest a period should be put to the life of a sober critic by a raving philosopher."[1]

This statement is in a note to a Review of Hume's "own life," and it has after it the letters "Rev." which serve to give it the attestation of William Shakespeare Kenrick, the editor of *The London Review*, and a man whose sole title to literary remembrance rests on the hardy effrontery and deadly spite of his falsehoods. There is nothing in the story to make it in itself incredible — for Hume was far from being that docile mass of imperturbability, which so large a portion of the world have taken him for. But the anecdote requires authentication; and has it

[1] London Review, v. 200.

not. Moreover, there are circumstances strongly against its truth. Hume was in Scotland at the time when the criticism on his work was published: he did not visit London for some years afterwards; and, to believe the story, we must look upon it not as a momentary ebullition of passion, but as a manifestation of long-treasured resentment, — a circumstance inconsistent with his character, inconsistent with human nature in general, and not in keeping with the modified tone of dissatisfaction with the criticism, evinced in his correspondence.

While Hume was preparing for the press the third part of his "Treatise of Human Nature,"—on the subject of Morals, Francis Hutcheson, then professor of moral philosophy in the university of Glasgow, was enjoying a reputation in the philosophical world scarcely inferior to that of either of his great contemporaries, Berkeley and Wolff. From the following correspondence it will be seen that Hume submitted the manuscript of his forthcoming volume to Hutcheson's inspection; and he shows more inclination to receive with deference the suggestions of that distinguished man, than to allow himself to be influenced from any other quarter. But still, it will be observed that it is only in details that he receives instruction, and that he vigorously supports the fundamental principles of his system. The correspondence illustrates the method in which he held himself as working with human nature — not as an artist, but an anatomist, whose minute critical examinations might be injured by any bursts of feeling or eloquence.[1] The letters show how far he saw into the depths of the utilitarian system; and prove that it was more

[1] See above, p. 91.

completely formed in his mind than it appeared in his book. Notions of prudence appear to have restrained him, at that time, from issuing so full a development of the system as that which he afterwards published; but he soon discovered that it was not in that department of his works that he stood on the most dangerous ground.

HUME *to* FRANCIS HUTCHESON.

"*Ninewells*, 17*th Sept.* 1739.

" "SIR,—I am much obliged to you for your reflections on my papers. I have perused them with care, and find they will be of use to me. You have mistaken my meaning in some passages, which, upon examination, I have found to proceed from some ambiguity or defect in my expression.

"What affected me most in your remarks, is your observing that there wants a certain warmth in the cause of virtue, which you think all good men would relish, and could not displease amidst abstract inquiries. I must own this has not happened by chance, but is the effect of a reasoning either good or bad. There are different ways of examining the mind, as well as the body. One may consider it either as an anatomist or as a painter: either to discover its most secret springs and principles, or to describe the grace and beauty of its actions. I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two views. Where you pull off the skin, and display all the minute parts, there appears something trivial, even in the noblest attitudes and most vigorous actions; nor can you ever render the object graceful or engaging, but by clothing the parts again with skin and flesh, and presenting only their bare outside. An anatomist, however, can give very

good advice to a painter or statuary. And, in like manner, I am persuaded that a metaphysician may be very helpful to a moralist, though I cannot easily conceive these two characters united in the same work. Any warm sentiment of morals, I am afraid, would have the air of declamation amidst abstract reasonings, and would be esteemed contrary to good taste. And though I am much more ambitious of being esteemed a friend to virtue than a writer of taste, yet I must always carry the latter in my eye, otherwise I must despair of ever being serviceable to virtue. I hope these reasons will satisfy you; though at the same time I intend to make a new trial, if it be possible to make the moralist and metaphysician agree a little better.

"I cannot agree to your sense of *natural*. 'Tis founded on final causes, which is a consideration that appears to me pretty uncertain and unphilosophical. For, pray, what is the end of man? Is he created for happiness, or for virtue? for this life, or for the next? for himself, or for his Maker? Your definition of *natural* depends upon solving these questions, which are endless, and quite wide of my purpose. I have never called justice unnatural, but only artificial. '*Atque ipsa utilitas, justi prope mater et æqui*,'[1] says one of the best moralists of antiquity. Grotius and Puffendorf, to be consistent, must assert the same.

"Whether natural abilities be virtue, is a dispute of words. I think I follow the common use of language; *virtus* signified chiefly courage among the Romans. I was just now reading this character of Alexander VI. in Guicciardin. 'In Alessandro sesto fu solertia et sagacità singulare: consiglio eccellente, efficacia a

[1] Horat. Lib. i. Sat. iii. l. 98.

persuadere maravigliosa, et a tutte le faccende gravi, sollicitudine, et destrezza incredibile. Ma erano queste virtù avanzate di grande intervallo da vitii.'[1] Were benevolence the only virtue, no characters could be mixed, but would depend entirely on their degrees of benevolence. Upon the whole, I desire to take my catalogue of virtues from 'Cicero's Offices,' not from 'The Whole Duty of Man.' I had indeed the former book in my eye in all my reasonings.

"I have many other reflections to communicate to you; but it would be troublesome. I shall therefore conclude with telling you, that I intend to follow your advice in altering most of those passages you have remarked as defective in point of prudence; though, I must own, I think you a little too delicate. Except a man be in orders, or be immediately concerned in the instruction of youth, I do not think his character depends upon his philosophical speculations, as the world is now modelled; and a little liberty seems requisite to bring into the public notice a book that is calculated for few readers. I hope you will allow me the freedom of consulting you when I am in any difficulty, and believe me," &c.

"P.S. — I cannot forbear recommending another thing to your consideration. Actions are not virtuous nor vicious, but only so far as they are proofs of certain qualities or durable principles in the mind. This is a point I should have established more expressly than I have done. Now, I desire you to consider if

[1] Edit. 1636, p. 5. "Alexander the Sixth was endowed with wonderful cunning and extraordinary sagacity; had a surprising genius in suggesting expedients in the cabinet, and uncommon efficacy in persuading; and in all matters of consequence an incredible earnestness and dexterity."—Goldard's Translation.

there be any quality that is virtuous, without having a tendency either to the public good or to the good of the person who possesses it. If there be none without these tendencies, we may conclude that their merit is derived from sympathy. I desire you would only consider the *tendencies* of qualities, not their actual operations, which depend on chance. *Brutus* riveted the chains of *Rome* faster by his opposition; but the natural tendency of his noble dispositions—his public spirit and magnanimity—was to establish her liberty.

"You are a great admirer of *Cicero* as well as I am. Please to review the fourth book *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum:* where you find him prove against the *Stoics*, that if there be no other goods but virtue, 'tis impossible there can be any virtue, because the mind would then want all motives to begin its actions upon; and 'tis on the goodness or badness of the motives that the virtue of the action depends. This proves, that to every virtuous action there must be a motive or impelling passion distinct from the virtue, and that virtue can never be the sole motive to any action. You do not assent to this: though I think there is no proposition more certain or important. I must own my proofs were not distinct enough and must be altered. You see with what reluctance I part with you, though I believe it is time I should ask your pardon for so much trouble."

In the mean time we find Hume anxious to be employed in the capacity of a travelling governor or tutor, and writing to Mr. George Carre of Nisbet, intimating his readiness to officiate to that gentleman's cousins, Lord Haddington and Mr. Baillie, if there are no favoured candidates for the situation. There

is nothing in the letter to excite much interest.[1] He says, he hears the young gentlemen are proposing to travel; observes that he has the honour to be their relation, "which gives a governor a better air in attending his pupils," and that he has some leisure time. In his letter to a physician, in the preceding chapter, we find him mentioning this office as one of the few to which his prospects were limited, and, at the same time, as one for which his knowledge of the world scarcely fitted him. His six years' farther experience of life had perhaps in his own opinion provided him with opportunities of better qualifying himself for the duties of this office. It was held by many able and accomplished men at that time, and appears to have been the profession of his friend Michael Ramsay. There are no traces of the manner in which his application was received.

From such matters as these, one readily turns with interest to the most trifling notices connected with his literary history. On 4th March, 1740, we find him thus writing to Hutcheson.

"My bookseller has sent to Mr. Smith a copy of my book, which I hope he has received, as well as your letter. I have not yet heard what he has done with the abstract; perhaps you have. I have got it printed in London, but not in *The Works of the Learned*, there having been an article with regard to my book, somewhat abusive, printed in that work, before I sent up the abstract."[2]

The "Smith" here mentioned as receiving a copy of the Treatise, we may fairly conclude, notwithstanding the universality of the name, to be Adam Smith, who was then a student in the university of Glasgow,

[1] Dated, 12th November, 1739. MS. R.S.E.
[2] MS. R.S.E.

and not quite seventeen years old.[1] It may be inferred from Hume's letter, that Hutcheson had mentioned Smith as a person on whom it would serve some good purpose to bestow a copy of the Treatise: and we have here, evidently, the first introduction to each other's notice, of two friends, of whom it can be said, that there was no third person writing the English language during the same period, who has had so much influence upon the opinions of mankind as either of these two men.

The correspondence with Hutcheson is continued as follows:

HUME *to* FRANCIS HUTCHESON.

"16*th March*, 1740.

"DEAR SIR,—I must trouble you to write that letter you was so kind as to offer to Longman the bookseller. I concluded somewhat of a hasty bargain with my bookseller, from indolence and an aversion to bargaining: as also because I was told that few or no bookseller would engage for one edition with a new author. I was also determined to keep my name a secret for some time, though I find I have failed in that point. I sold one edition of these two volumes for fifty guineas, and also engaged myself heedlessly in a clause, which may prove troublesome, viz. that upon printing a second edition I shall take all the copies remaining upon hand at the bookseller's price at the time. 'Tis in order to have some check upon my bookseller, that I would willingly engage with another: and I doubt not but your recommendation would be very serviceable to me, even though you be not personally acquainted with him.

"I wait with some impatience for a second edition,

[1] He was born on 5th June, 1723.

principally on account of alterations I intend to make in my performance. This is an advantage that we authors possess since the invention of printing, and renders the *nonum prematur in annum* not so necessary to us as to the ancients. Without it I should have been guilty of a very great temerity, to publish at my years so many novelties in so delicate a part of philosophy; and at any rate, I am afraid that I must plead as my excuse that very circumstance of youth which may be urged against me. I assure you, that without running any of the heights of scepticism, I am apt in a cool hour to suspect, in general, that most of my reasonings will be more useful by furnishing hints and exciting people's curiosity, than as containing any principles that will augment the stock of knowledge, that must pass to future ages.[1] I wish I could discover more fully the particulars wherein I have failed. I admire so much the candour I have observed in Mr. Locke, yourself, and a very few more, that I would be extremely ambitious of imitating it, by frankly confessing my errors. If I do not imitate it, it must proceed neither from my being free from errors nor want of inclination, but from my real unaffected ignorance. I shall consider more carefully all the particulars you mention to me: though with regard to *abstract ideas*, 'tis with difficulty I can entertain a doubt on that head, notwithstanding your authority. Our conversation together has furnished me a hint, with which I shall augment the second edition. 'Tis this—the word *simple idea* is an abstract term, comprehending different individuals that are similar. Yet the point of their similarity, from the very nature of such ideas, is not distinct nor separable from the rest. Is not this a proof, among many others, that

[1] See above, p. 78.

there may be a similarity without any possible separation even in thought.

"I must consult you in a point of prudence. I have concluded a reasoning with these two sentences: 'When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that, from the particular constitution of your nature, you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat, and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind. And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics, is to be regarded as a mighty advancement of the speculative sciences, though like that too it has little or no influence on practice.'[1]

"Is not this laid a little too strong? I desire your opinion of it, though I cannot entirely promise to conform myself to it. I wish from my heart I could avoid concluding, that since morality, according to your opinion, as well as mine, is determined merely by sentiment, it regards only human nature and human life. This has been often urged against you, and the consequences are very momentous. If you make any alterations in your performances, I can assure you, there are many who desire you would more fully consider this point, if you think that the truth lies on the popular side. Otherwise common prudence, your character, and situation, forbid you [to] touch upon it. If morality were determined by reason, that is the same to all rational beings; but

[1] See this passage in the "Treatise of Human Nature," Book iii. part i. sect. 1. where it appears with no other variation than the substitution of the word "considerable," for mighty. It thus appears that whatever remarks Hutcheson made on the passage, they were not such as to induce the author materially to alter it.

nothing but experience can assure us that the sentiments are the same. What experience have we with regard to superior beings? How can we ascribe to them any sentiments at all? They have implanted those sentiments in us for the conduct of life like our bodily sensations, which they possess not themselves. I expect no answer to these difficulties in the compass of a letter. 'Tis enough if you have patience to read so long a letter as this.—I am." &c.

The third volume of the "Treatise of Human Nature" being the part relating to morals, was published by Thomas Longman in 1740. It is not so original as the metaphysical part of the work, nor are its principles so clearly and decidedly laid down. Its author's metaphysical theories were rather modified than confirmed in his subsequent works. But his opinions on ethical subjects, only indistinctly shadowed forth in his early work, were afterwards reduced to a more compact system, and were more clearly and fully set forth.

The metaphysical department of the Treatise is a system with a great leading principle throughout, of which its author intended that all the details should be but the individual applications. If his reasoning in that department of his work be accurate, he sweeps away all other systems of the foundation of knowledge, and substitutes another in their stead. But the third book, "on Morals," like the second, on "the Passions," has no such pretension. The leading principles of the metaphysical department are certainly kept in view, but the details are not necessarily parts of it. They have a separate existence of their own: they are an analysis of phenomena which we witness in our daily life; and the reader assents or dissents as the several

opinions expressed correspond with or diverge from his own observation of what he sees passing in the world around him, without, in that mental operation, either receiving or rejecting any general theory. In short, it is to a considerable extent a series of observations of human conduct and character; and as such they are admitted or denied, are sympathized with or contemned, according to the previous feelings and opinions of the reader. Among the prominent features of the theoretical part of this book, is the admission of a moral sense,[1] but the negation of an abstract code of morality, separately existing, and independent of the position of the persons who are applying this sense. The work in some measure foreshadows the systems which have been respectively called the utilitarian and the selfish; the former applying as the scale of moral excellence the extent to which an action is beneficial or hurtful to the human race; the latter referring the actions of mankind, whether good or bad, interested or disinterested, to self, and to impulses which are always connected with the individual in whom they act, and his passions or desires.

In this respect it had its influence, when joined to other hints thrown out by philosophers, in supplying the texts on which Helvetius, Beccaria, and Bentham discoursed at greater length and with a clearer application to definite systems. The utilitarian principle Hume afterwards extended and rendered systematic, in pursuance of the views announced in his correspondence with Hutcheson. In connexion with what is

[1] It may be questioned if any reader of Hume's works has been able to reconcile this admission of the existence of a moral sense, which, according to his own account of it is an intuition, with his metaphysical theory of impressions and ideas, notwithstanding his ingenuity in ranking it among the impressions.

called the "selfish system" of morals, he went no farther than to point out that the source of every impulse must have its relation to the individual person on whom that impulse acts. If it be the sordid impulse of the miser, it must be because the man who feels it loves gold; if it be the profuse impulse of the spendthrift, it must be because the individual who spends has a corresponding desire within himself; if it be the charitable impulse of the person who feeds the poor, it must be because that person is under the influence of inducements which incline him rather to do so than not do so. If the principle be applied to a martyr suffering for conscience sake, or to a soldier who prefers death to submission, it is still because the person who acts fulfils impulses acting on himself. But this is a subject from which Hume appears to have shrunk in his subsequent works. He seems to have disliked the character of being connected with "the selfish school;" and he thus failed to revert to a subject on which his rigid and clear examination would have been a matter of greater interest, than his merely arguing against self-interest being the proper rule of action — an argument that with him amounts to nothing more than a protest against that vulgarization of the system, which charges it with such a doctrine for the purpose of rendering it odious. We shall afterwards find that he had a correspondence on this subject with Helvetius, who wished to bring him over to the admission of his own opinions.

In this department of the Treatise there are some inquiries into the first principles of law and government. Here, if any where, he shows the influence over his mind of his reading in the works of the civilians. His own utilitarian principle, when carried out on these subjects, shows that the best government

is that which is most conducive to the welfare of the community. But he occasionally mixes up this principle with elements totally heterogeneous to it—as in those instances where he considers the privilege of governing as held by the same tenure with the right of property, and views the question whether any particular government is good or bad, in its effect upon the persons governed, as secondary to the question whether it is or is not held by a good tenure when it is considered as if it were a matter of private property. But, notwithstanding these inconsistencies, which he afterwards amended when he had more fully investigated the principles of politics, the general aim of his observations on the sources of government is to show that they are to be found in reason, and to dispel the various irrational and superstitious notions of political authority, which are comprehended in the use of the term Divine Right. Indeed, the observations which he makes with a practical application to governments, are a partial anticipation of the clear good sense which distinguished his subsequent political essays. In connexion with the motives of that insurrection which occurred within eight years after the publication of the Treatise, and with the partiality for high monarchical principles with which Hume's name is so much associated, the following remarks are interesting and instructive.

Whoever considers the history of the several nations of the world, their revolutions, conquests, increase and diminution, the manner in which their particular governments are established, and the successive right transmitted from one person to another, will soon learn to treat very lightly all disputes concerning the rights of princes, and will be convinced that a strict adherence to any general rules, and the rigid loyalty to particular persons and families, on which

some people set so high a value, are virtues that hold less of reason than of bigotry and superstition. In this particular, the study of history confirms the reasonings of true philosophy, which, showing us the original qualities of human nature, teaches us to regard the controversies in politics as incapable of any decision in most cases, and as entirely subordinate to the interests of peace and liberty. Where the public good does not evidently demand a change, 'tis certain that the concurrence of all those titles, *original contract*, *long possession*, *present possession*, *succession*, and *positive laws*, forms the strongest title to sovereignty, and is justly regarded as sacred and inviolable. But when these titles are mingled and opposed in different degrees, they often occasion perplexity, and are less capable of solution from the arguments of lawyers and philosophers, than from the swords of the soldiery. Who shall tell me, for instance, whether Germanicus or Drusus ought to have succeeded Tiberius, had he died while they were both alive, without naming any of them for his successor? Ought the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood, in a nation where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public? Ought Germanicus to be esteemed the eldest son, because he was born before Drusus; or the younger, because he was adopted after the birth of his brother? Ought the right of the elder to be regarded in a nation, where the eldest brother had no advantage in the succession to private families? Ought the Roman empire at that time to be esteemed hereditary, because of two examples; or ought it, even so early, to be regarded as belonging to the stronger, or the present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation? Upon whatever principles we may pretend to answer these and such-like questions, I am afraid we shall never be able to satisfy an impartial inquirer, who adopts no party in political controversies, and will be satisfied with nothing but sound reason and philosophy.[1]

Some of Hume's notes, of matters which have occurred to him in the course of his reading as worthy of observation, or of remarkable thoughts passing through

[1] Book iii. part ii. sect. 10.

his mind, have been preserved.[1] They appear to be merely a few stray leaves, which have accidentally survived the loss of many others, as the number of subjects to which they refer is limited in comparison with the wide compass of knowledge embraced in Hume's various works. The specimens so preserved, appear generally to have been written at this period of his life, with the exception, perhaps, of those which are printed above, and which have reference to physical science.[2] They are set down with clearness and precision, as if by one who knew both the step in a series of reasoning to which each of them belongs, and the form in which it should be expressed. They are written on long sheets of paper; and unless the few that appear under the head "Natural Philosophy," and some which have the general heading "Philosophy," they appear to have been subjected to no system of pre-arrangement, such as that which Locke suggested, but to have been set down according as the fruits of the annotator's reading or thought presented themselves to him. A few specimens are here given: they will be found to have been chiefly made use of in the "Natural History of Religion," and in the "Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations," while a few of them—as for instance that relating to Gustavus Vasa—make their appearance in the little volume of "Essays, Moral and Political," published in 1741.[3] A considerable proportion of them have not been made use of in Hume's printed works, and some of them

[1] In the MSS. R.S.E. [2] See p. 95.

[3] This circumstance, showing that a portion of the manuscript has been written before the publication of these essays, points to the present as the period to which a collection of extracts from the notes will most aptly apply, although some of them may have been made at a later date.

contain information which is embodied in Smith's "Wealth of Nations." It is an occurrence quite characteristic of the friendship of these two great men, that either of them should have supplied the other with facts or ideas applicable to the subjects on which he might be engaged.

EXTRACTS FROM A COLLECTION OF MEMORANDUMS.

"

Perhaps the custom of allowing parents to murder their infant children, though barbarous, tends to render a state more populous, as in China. Many marry by that inducement; and such is the force of natural affection, that none make use of that privilege but in extreme necessity.

A pound of steel, when manufactured, may become of £10,000 value.

No hospitals in Holland have any land or settled revenue, and yet the poor better provided for than any where else in the world.

The Romans had two ways chiefly of levying their taxes,—by public lands, which were all dissipated by popular tribunes about the end of the republic; or by customs upon importation, which were different in different places; in some the fortieth part of the value; in Sicily the twentieth.

They had also a kind of excise, which began with the emperors, and was the two-hundredth or one-hundredth part of the value of all goods sold, the fiftieth of slaves.

Beside this, they had pretty early, even in the time of the republic, duties upon mines and salt; and in order to levy the former more easily, they forbid all mines in Italy. Their mines near Carthagena

yielded them 25,000 drachms a-day. *Burman de Vict. Rom.*

In the time of the monarchy, the kings had the sole power of imposing taxes. In the time of the republic, 'tis strange to see this power belonging sometimes to the magistrates, sometimes to the senate, or to the people. We learn from Livy, in the second Punic War, that the senate could contract debt alone. Polybius says, that all money matters belonged to the senate. The censors levied all the taxes, and farmed them out to the Roman knights. The Romans could be no great politicians; since the senate could not gain the sovereignty, nor the censors the supreme magistracy, notwithstanding these advantages.

All French projectors take it for granted that 'tis equally dangerous to make the people too easy as to oppress them too much. *Comte de Boulainvilliers.*

The charter governments in America, almost entirely independent of England.

Those north of Virginia interfere most with us in manufactures, which proceeds from the resemblance of soil and climate.

Gustavus Vasa is perhaps the only instance of a prince who humbled the clergy while he aspired to arbitrary power.

From 1729 to 1730, imported of corn into Ireland to the value of £274,000, — ascribed to the want of a drawback by the Irish House of Commons.

The exchange to Holland always against us. *Craftsman.* Not true.

Our exports no rule to judge of our trade: masters enter more than they export, to persuade others that their ship is near full.

The East India Company have offered to pay all the duties upon tea, provided it may be sold duty free.

The interest the crown has in seizures thought to be the cause why they were refused. — Never asked; because afterwards they cannot expect the execution of the laws against foreign tea.

The government of England perhaps the only one, except Holland, wherein the legislature has not force enough to execute the laws without the good-will of the people. This is an irregular kind of check upon the legislature.

Men have much oftener erred from too great respect to government than from too little.

The French sugar colonies supplied entirely with provisions from our northern colonies.

$\frac{15000}{20000}$ Hogsheads of tobacco exported to France at £20 a hogshead; at £5.

The gross produce of the English customs £3,000,000 a-year; the neat produce £1,800,000.

In all the British Leeward Islands, the muster-roll exceeded not two thousand five hundred men a few years ago, and yet there are twenty thousand blacks in Antigua alone.

The French fish on the coasts of Newfoundland in the winter, which gives them an advantage above us.

Our bustle about the Ostend company, the cause of the great progress of the French company.

The East India Company have desired to have China raw silk put upon the same footing as to duty with the Italian, but have been refused.

The reason why the court has a greater superiority among the Lords than Commons, beside the bishops, is that the court gives places to the Lords, chiefly for their interest among the Commons.

Eighteen hundred children put upon the parishes at Dublin in five years, of which, upon inquiry, there remained only twenty-eight.

Ninety-five thousand seamen computed to be in France; only sixty thousand in England.

Ships formerly lasted twenty-seven years in the English navy; now only thirteen.

Within the last two thousand years, almost all the despotic governments of the world have been improving, and the free ones degenerating; so that now they are pretty near a par.

There must be a balance in all governments; and the inconvenience of allowing a single person to have any share is, that what may be too little for a balance in one hand will be too much in another.

The fiars of wheat, in 1400, were fixed at Edinburgh, 6 sh. 7 p. Scots money.

Banks first invented in Sweden on account of their copper money.

There is not a word of trade in all Machiavel, which is strange, considering that Florence rose only by trade.

About twenty thousand tun of wine imported into England about the time of the first Dutch war.—*Sir Josiah Child.*

One per cent. in interest, worse than two per cent. in customs; because ships pay the interest, not the customs.

Eight hundred thousand Jews chased from Spain by Ferdinand the Catholic.—*Geddes.*[1]

About 100,000 Moors condemned for apostacy, by the Inquisition, in forty years. 4000 burned.—*Id.*

Near a million of Moors expelled Spain.—*Id.*

The Commons of Castile, in taking arms against Charles the Fifth, among other things petition, that no sheep nor wool shall be allowed to go out of the kingdom.—*Id.*

[1] Miscellaneous Tracts, by Michael Geddes. 1730.

The interest in Rome reduced to six per cent. under Tiberius.—*Tacit.*

The laws of Arragon required a public trial for the subjects: but allowed the king a kind of despotic power over his servants and ministers, in order to render the great men less fond of court preferment.—*Geddes.*

'Twould be more easy for the English liberties to recover themselves than the Roman, because of the mixed government. The transition is not so violent.

The farms were large among the ancients. The Leontine farms in Sicily contained 130,000 acres, and were farmed to eighty-three farmers. — *Cicero in Verrem.*

After the conquest of Egypt by Augustus, the prices of every thing doubled in Rome.

The Roman colonies, in the time of Augustus, voted in their colonies, and sent their votes to Rome.

The Romans very exact in their book-keeping; in so much, that a crime, such as bribery or poisoning, could be proved or refuted from their books.—*Cic. pro Cluentio.*

They also kept commentaries or ephemerides, wherein every action or word was wrote down; at least Augustus practised this with his daughters and nieces. — *Sueton.*

In Nero's time, 30,000 buried in one autumn, while there was a plague.

Machiavel makes it a question, whether absolute power is best founded on the nobility or the people. In my opinion, a subject who usurps upon a free state, cannot trust the nobles, and must caress the people. This was the case with the Roman emperors. But an established monarchy is better founded on the nobles.

When the Lex Licinia was promulgated, the senate voted that it should be binding from that moment, as if it had been voted by the people.

In 1721, the English and Dutch drew more money from Spain than France did.—*Dict. de Com.*

There is computed to be 3000 tun of gold in the bank of Amsterdam, at 100,000 florins a tun.—*Id.*

A ship of 50 or 60 tun has commonly seven hands, and increases a man every 10 tun.—*Id.*

The French commerce sunk much about the middle of the seventeenth century, by reason of their infidelity in their goods.—*Id.*

There seems to have been a very bad police in Rome; for Cicero says, that if Milo had waylaid Clodius, he would have waited for him in the neighbourhood, where his death might have been attributed to robbers, by reason of the commonness of the accident; and yet Clodius had above sixty servants with him, all armed.

Thirty-eight holidays in the year in France.—*Vauban.* One hundred and eighty working days at a medium.—*Id.*

The people commonly live poorest in countries which have the richest natural soil.

600 slaves, working in the silver mines of Athens, yielded a mina a-day to their master Xenophon. He computes that 10,000 slaves would produce a revenue of 100 talents a-year.

The holidays in Athens made two months in the year.—*Salmasius.*

The public in Athens paid 20 per cent. for money.—*Xenophon.*

Many of the chief officers of the army were named by the people in old Rome.—*Liv.* lib. ix. and lib. vii.

The Roman senate were obliged by law to give

their authority to the Comitia Centuriata before the suffrages were called.—*Id.* lib. viii. cap. 12.

The Pontifices of old Rome suppressed the records of their religion on purpose, as well as those of new Rome.—*Id.* lib. ix.

Every part of the office of the senate could be brought before the people; even the distribution of provinces. An evident part of the executive.—*Id.* lib. x. cap. 24.

£60,000 sterling amassed beforehand for building the Capitol.—*Id.* lib. i.

Plays, a part of religious service for a pestilence.—*Id.* lib. vii.

The senators were forbid trade among the Romans.—*Id.* lib. viii. cap. 63.

In the Roman government, there was a great restraint on liberty, since a man could not leave his colony, or live where he pleased.—*Id.* lib. xxxix. cap. 3.

External superstition punished by the Romans.—*Id.* lib. xxxix. cap. 16.

They were very jealous of the established religion.—*Id.* lib. xl. cap. 29.

Robbers established in legal companies in Egypt; and such captains as Jonathan Wyld established.—*Diodorus Siculus.*

Whoever consecrated the tenth of their goods to Hercules, was esteemed sure of happiness by the Romans.—*Id.*

Jupiter, according to the Cretan tradition, was a pious worshipper of the gods; a clear proof that those people had a preceding religion.—*Id.* lib. v.

Gradenigo's change of the Venetian republic was made in 1280.—*St. Didier.*

The clergy are chosen by a popular call.—*Id.*

Vossius says he saw in Rome, that, digging forty foot underground, they found the tops of columns buried.

Horses were very rare among the ancients, (before the Romans,) and not employed in any thing but war. 1st, In the retreat of the ten thousand, 'twould have been easy to have mounted the whole army, if horses had been as common as at present. 2d, They had about fifty horses, which, instead of increasing, diminished during the road, though very useful. 3d, In the spoils of villages, Xenophon frequently mentions sheep and oxen; never horses. 4th, Cleombrotus' army, in lib. v. Hist. made use of asses for the carriages.

Demosthenes tells the Athenians, that a very honest man of Macedonia, who would not lie, told him such and such things of Philip's situation: a kind of style that marks but bad intelligence, and little communication among the different states.—*Olynth.* 2.

The 30 tyrants killed about 1500 citizens untried. —*Æschines.*

Thrasybulus restoring the people, and Cæsar's conquest, the only instances in ancient history of revolutions without barbarous cruelty.

There seems to be a natural course of things which brings on the destruction of great empires. They push their conquests till they come to barbarous nations, which stop their progress by the difficulty of subsisting great armies. After that, the nobility and considerable men of the conquering nation and best provinces withdraw gradually from the frontier army, by reason of its distance from the capital, and barbarity of the country in which they quarter. They forget the use of war. Their barbarous soldiers become their masters. These have no law but their

sword, both from their bad education, and from their distance from the sovereign to whom they bear no affection. Hence disorder, violence, anarchy, tyranny, and a dissolution of empire.

Perseus's ambassadors to the Rhodians spoke a style like the modern, with regard to the balance of power, but are condemned by Livy.—Lib. xlii. cap. 46.

Herodotus makes a scruple of so much as delivering an account of the difference of religion among foreigners, lest he should give offence.—Lib. ii.

The Egyptians more careful of preserving their cats than their houses in time of fire.—*Id.*

Plutarch says, that the effect of the naval power of Athens, established by Themistocles, was to render their government more popular: and that husbandmen and labourers are more friends to nobility than merchants and seamen are.—*In Vita Themist.*

Solon is the first person mentioned in history to have raised the value of money, which, says Plutarch, was a benefit to the poor in paying their debts, and no loss to the rich.—*In Vita Solon.*

PHILOSOPHY.

Men love pleasure more than they hate pain.—*Bayle.*

Men are vicious, but hate a religion that authorizes vice.—*Id.*

The accounts we have of the sentiments of the ancient philosophers not very distinct nor consistent. Cicero contradicts himself in two sentences: in saying that Thales allowed the ordering of the world by a mind, and in saying that Anaxagoras was the first.

Strato's atheism the most dangerous of the ancient

— holding the origin of the world from nature, or a matter endued with activity. Bayle thinks there are none but the Cartesians can refute this atheism.

A Stratonician could retort the arguments of all the sects of philosophy. Of the Stoics, who maintained their God to be fiery and compound; and of the Platonicians, who asserted the ideas to be distinct from the Deity. The same question,—Why the parts or ideas of God had that particular arrangement?—is as difficult as why the world had.

Some pretend that there can be no necessity, according to the system of atheism, "because even matter cannot be determined without something superior to determine it."—*Fenelon.*

Three proofs of the existence of a God: 1st, Some thing necessarily existent, and what is so is infinitely perfect. 2d, The idea of infinite must come from an infinite being. 3d, The idea of infinite perfection implies that of actual existence.

There is a remarkable story to confirm the Cartesian philosophy of the brain. A man hurt by the fall of a horse, forgot about twenty years of his life, and remembered what went before in a much more lively manner than usual.

CHAPTER IV.

1741—1745. Æt. 30—34.

Publication of the Essays, Moral and Political—Their Character—Correspondence with Home and Hutcheson—Hume's Remarks on Hutcheson's System—Education and Accomplishments of the Scottish Gentry—Hume's Intercourse with Mure of Caldwell and Oswald of Dunnikier—Opinions on a Sermon by Dr. Leechman—Attempts to succeed Dr. Pringle in the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh.

A SMALL duodecimo volume, the first of the "Essays Moral and Political," was published at Edinburgh in 1741, and the second was published in 1742. The publication was anonymous; and it is remarkable that, although thus shielded, Hume appears to have, at that early period, been so anxious to disconnect himself with the authorship of the Treatise, that, in the advertisement, he addresses his readers as if he were then appearing as an author for the first time. "Most of these essays," he says, "were wrote with a view of being published as weekly papers, and were intended to comprehend the designs both of the Spectators and Craftsmen. But, having dropt that undertaking, partly from laziness, partly from want of leisure, and being willing to make trial of my talents for writing before I ventured upon any more serious compositions, I was induced to commit these trifles to the judgment of the public. Like most new authors, I must confess I feel some anxiety concerning the success of my work; but one thing makes me more secure,—that the reader may condemn my abilities, but must approve of my moderation and impartiality in my method of handling political subjects; and, as long as my moral character is in safety,

I can, with less anxiety, abandon my learning and capacity to the most severe censure and examination."

Some of the subjects of these essays were not less untrodden at the time when they appeared, than they are hackneyed in the present day. Of these may be cited, "The Liberty of the Press;" "The Parties of Great Britain;" "The Independency of Parliament." When they are compared with the *Craftsman*, with *Mist's Journal*, and with the other periodicals of the day, which had set the example of discussing such subjects, these essays as little resemble their precursors, as De Lolme's "Remarks on the British Constitution" do the articles in a daily London party paper. Whatever he afterwards became, Hume was at that time no party politician. He retained the Stoic severity of thought with which we have found that he had sixteen years previously invested himself; and would allow the excitements or rewards of no party in the state to drag him out of the even middle path of philosophical observation. There is consequently a wonderful impartiality in these essays, and an acuteness of observation, which to the reader, who keeps in view how little the true workings of the constitution were noticed in that day, is not less remarkable. How completely, for instance, has the wisdom of the following observations in the essay on "The Liberty of the Press," been justified by the experience of a century.

We need not dread from this liberty any such ill consequences as followed from the harangues of the popular demagogues of Athens and tribunes of Rome. A man reads a book or pamphlet alone and coolly. There is none present from whom he can catch the passion by contagion. He is not hurried away by the force and energy of action. And should he be wrought up to never so seditious a humour, there

is no violent resolution presented to him by which he can immediately vent his passion. The liberty of the press, therefore, however abused, can scarce ever excite popular tumults or rebellion. And as to those murmurs or secret discontents it may occasion, 'tis better they should get vent in words, that they may come to the knowledge of the magistrate before it be too late, in order to his providing a remedy against them. Mankind, 'tis true, have always a greater propension to believe what is said to the disadvantage of their governors than the contrary; but this inclination is inseparable from them, whether they have liberty or not. A whisper may fly as quick, and be as pernicious as a pamphlet. Nay, it will be more pernicious, where men are not accustomed to think freely, or distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood.

It has also been found, as the experience of mankind increases, that the *people* are no such dangerous monster as they have been represented, and that 'tis in every respect better to guide them like rational creatures, than to lead or drive them like brute beasts. Before the United Provinces set the example, toleration was deemed incompatible with good government; and 'twas thought impossible that a number of religious sects could live together in harmony and peace, and have all of them an equal affection to their common country and to each other. England has set a like example of civil liberty; and though this liberty seems to occasion some small ferment at present, it has not as yet produced any pernicious effects; and it is to be hoped that men, being every day more accustomed to the free discussion of public affairs, will improve in their judgment of them, and be with greater difficulty seduced by every idle rumour and popular clamour.

'Tis a very comfortable reflection to the lovers of liberty, that this peculiar privilege of Britain is of a kind that cannot easily be wrested from us, and must last as long as our government remains in any degree free and independent. 'Tis seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once. Slavery has so frightful an aspect to men accustomed to freedom, that it must steal in upon them by degrees, and must disguise itself in a thousand shapes in order to be received. But if the liberty of the press ever be lost, it must

be lost at once. The general laws against sedition and libelling are at present as strong as they possibly can be made. Nothing can impose a farther restraint but either the clapping an imprimatur upon the press, or the giving very large discretionary powers to the court to punish whatever displeases them. But these concessions would be such a barefaced violation of liberty, that they will probably be the last efforts of a despotic government. We may conclude that the liberty of Britain is gone for ever when these attempts shall succeed.

The opinion generally acceded to at the present day, that ministerial and judicial functions should be intrusted to responsible individuals, and not to bodies of men who may individually escape from a joint responsibility, is anticipated in the following passage:— "Honour is a great check upon mankind; but where a considerable body of men act together, this check is in a great measure removed, since a man is sure to be approved of by his own party for what promotes the common interest, and he soon learns to despise the clamour of adversaries."[1] The Grenville Act, and the subsequent measures for reducing the number of the judges on controverted elections, are a practical commentary on the truth of this remark.

It has often been observed, that foreigners have been the first to remark the leading peculiarities of the British constitution, and of the administration of justice in this country, in a manner rational and unimpassioned, yet so as to give them greater prominence, and a more full descriptive development than they obtain from our own impassioned party writers —an observation attested by the character which the works of Montesquieu and De Lolme held in the preceding century, and those of Thierry, Cottu, Meyer, and Raumer, have obtained in the present.

[1] Essay on the Independency of Parliament.

The reason of this superiority is to be sought in the circumstance that the acuteness of these foreign observers was not obscured, or their feelings excited, by any connexion with the workings of the systems they have described; and the isolation from active life in which Hume was placed, appears to have in some measure given him like qualifications for the examination of our political institutions. He expresses a general partiality for the monarchical government of Britain, but it is a partiality of a calm utilitarian character, which would not be inconsistent with an equally great esteem for a well-ordered republic. On his philosophical appreciation of its merits, the monarchy has no stronger claims than these—that to have an individual at the head of the government who is merely the name through which other persons act, and who is not amenable to any laws, while the real actors are personally responsible for what they do in his name, is an expedient arrangement. That it is very convenient to have some fixed criterion such as the hereditary principle, which shall obviate the trouble and danger of a competition for this elevated station. But that these are all recommendations on the ground of expediency, which may be outweighed by others, and the misconduct of a weak or tyrannical prince will justify an alteration in that arrangement, which convenience only, and the avoidance of occasions for turbulence and anarchy, have sanctioned.

It may be observed, that in the edition of these essays which he directed to be published after his death, many of those passages which bear a democratic tendency are suppressed. Such was the fate of the passage in "The Liberty of the Press" quoted above, and of the remarks pat within brackets in the quotation which follows, from the essay on "The Parties of Great Britain."

Some who will not venture to assert, that the real difference between Whig and Tory, was lost at the Revolution, seem inclined to think that the difference is now abolished, and that affairs are so far returned to their natural state, that there are at present no other parties amongst us but court and country; that is, men who, by interest or principle, are attached either to monarchy or to liberty. It must indeed be confessed, that the Tory party has of late decayed much in their numbers, still more in their zeal, and I may venture to say, still more in their credit and authority. [There is no man of knowledge or learning, who would not be ashamed to be thought of that party; and in almost all companies, the name of *Old Whig* is mentioned as an incontestible appellation of honour and dignity. Accordingly, the enemies of the ministry, as a reproach, call the courtiers the true *Tories;* and, as an honour, denominate the gentlemen in the *Opposition* the true *Whigs.*] The Tories have been so long obliged to talk in the republican style, that they seem to have made converts of themselves by their hypocrisy, and to have embraced the sentiments as well as language of their adversaries. There are, however, very considerable remains of that party in England, with all their old prejudices; and a proof that court and country are not our only parties, is, that almost all our dissenters side with the court, and the lower clergy, at least of the Church of England, with the opposition. This may convince us that some bias still hangs upon our constitution, some extrinsic weight which turns it from its natural course, and causes a confusion in our parties.[1]

Perhaps the most ambitious of the essays, and those on which the author bestowed most of his skill and attention, are "The Epicurean," "The Stoic," "The Sceptic," and "The Platonist." These are productions of the imagination, suggested apparently by the style and method of *The Spectator*. There is no attempt either to support or to attack the systems

[1] This concluding sentence was added in the third Edition, (1748,) in which also the passage within brackets was modified.

represented by the names of the essays, nor is there a description or definition of them; but on each occasion a member of one of these celebrated schools speaks in his own person, and describes the nature of the satisfaction that he finds in his own code of philosophy, as a solution of the great difficulty of the right rule of thought and action. "The Epicurean" takes a flight of imagination beyond that of Hume's other works. It departs from the cold atmosphere of philosophy, and desires to fascinate as well as enlighten. But though it possesses all the marks of a fine intellect, the reader is apt to feel how far more sweetly and gracefully the subject would have been handled by Addison, to whose department of literature it seems rightly to belong. The follower of Epicurus is not represented, as indulging in that gross licentiousness, as wallowing in that disgusting "stye" which the representations of Diogenes Laertius, and others, have impressed on the vulgar associations with the name of that master. On the other hand, the picture is far from embodying what many maintain to be the fundamental precept of Epicurus, that happiness being the great end sought by man, the proper method of reaching it is by the just regulation of the passions and propensities; a precept embodied in the

"Sperne voluptates. Nocet empta dolore voluptas."

Hume, who was not correcting errors, or instructing his readers in the true meaning of terms, or appreciation of characters, draws in "The Epicurean" a picture of one who is not gross or grovelling in his pleasures, and who restrains himself lest he should outrun enjoyment; but whose ruling principle is still that of the voluptuary.

The reader expects to find an attempt to draw his own picture in "The Sceptic;" but it is not to befound there.

The sceptic of the essays is not a man analyzing the principles of knowledge, to find wherein they consist, but one who is dissatisfied with rules of morality, and who, examining the current codes one after another, tosses them aside as unsatisfactory. It is into "The Stoic" that the writer has thrown most of his heart and sympathy; and it is in that sketch that, though probably without intention, some of the features of his own character are portrayed. There are passages which have considerable unison of tone with those autobiographical documents already quoted, in which he describes himself as having laboured to subdue the rebellious passions, to reduce the mind to a regulated system, to drive from it the influence of petty impressions,—to hold one great object of life in view, and to sacrifice before that object whatever stood in the way of his firmly settled purpose.

Of the success of these essays, and the method in which he occupied himself after their publication, he thus speaks in his "own life:"—"The work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth." On 13th June, 1742, he says to Henry Home:—"The *Essays* are all sold in London, as I am informed by two letters from English gentlemen of my acquaintance. There is a demand for them; and, as one of them tells me, Innys, the great bookseller in Paul's Churchyard, wonders there is not a new edition, for that he cannot find copies for his customers. I am also told that Dr. Butler has every where recommended them; so that I hope they will have some success. They may prove like dung with marl, and

bring forward the rest of my Philosophy, which is of a more durable, though of a harder and more stubborn nature. You see I can talk to you in your own style." In consequence of this favourable reception, a second edition appeared in 1742.

The communication of which the above is a part, contains the following short essay on the Orations of Cicero:—

I agree with you, that Cicero's reasonings in his "Orations" are very often loose, and what we should think to be wandering from the point; insomuch, that now-a-days a lawyer, who should give himself such liberties, would be in danger of meeting with a reprimand from the judge, or at least of being admonished of the point in question. His Orations against Verres, however, are an exception; though that plunderer was so impudent and open in his robberies, that there is the less merit in his conviction and condemnation. However, these orations have all a very great merit. The Oration for Milo is commonly esteemed Cicero's masterpiece, and indeed is, in many respects, very beautiful; but there are some points in the reasoning of it that surprise me. The true story of the death of Clodius, as we learn from the Roman historians, was this:—It was only a casual rencontre betwixt Milo and him; and the squabble was begun by their servants, as they passed each other on the road. Many of Clodius's servants were killed, the rest dispersed, and himself wounded, and obliged to hide himself in some neighbouring shops; from whence he was dragged out by Milo's orders, and killed in the street. These circumstances must have been largely insisted on by the prosecutors, and must have been proved too, since they have been received as truth by all antiquity. But not a word of them in Cicero, whose oration only labours to prove two points, that Milo did not waylay Clodius, and that Clodius was a bad citizen, and it was meritorious to kill him. If you read his oration, you'll agree with me. I believe that he has scarce spoke any thing to the question, as it would now be conceived, by a court of judicature.

The Orations for Marcellus and Ligarius, as also that for

Archias, are very fine, and chiefly because the subjects do not require or admit of close reasoning.

'Tis worth your while to read the conclusion of the Oration for Plancius, where I think the passions are very well touched. There are many noble passages in the Oration for Muræna, though 'tis certain that the prosecutors (who, however, were Servius Sulpicius, and Cato,) must either have said nothing to the purpose, or Cicero has said nothing. There is some of that oration lost.

'Twould be a pleasure to read and compare the two first philippics, that you may judge of the manners of those times, compared to modern manners. When Cicero spoke the first philippic, Antony and he had not broke all measures with each other, but there were still some remains of a very great intimacy and friendship betwixt them; and besides, Cicero lived in close correspondence with all the rest of Cæsar's captains; Dolabella had been his son-in-law; Hirtius and Pansa were his pupils; Trebasius was entirely his creature. For this reason, prudence laid him under great restraints at that time in his declamations against Antony; there is great elegance and delicacy in them; and many of the thoughts are very fine, particularly where he mentions his meeting Brutus, who had been obliged to leave Rome. "I was ashamed," says he, "that I durst return to Rome after Brutus had left it, and that I could be in safety where he could not." In short, the whole oration is of such a strain, that the Duke of Argyle might have spoke it in the House of Peers against my Lord Orford; and decency would not allow the greatest enemies to go farther. But this oration is not much admired by the ancients. The *Divine Philippic*, as Juvenal calls it, is the second, where he gives a full loose to his scurrility; and without having any point to gain by it, except vilifying his antagonist, and without supporting any fact by witnesses (for there was no trial or accusation) he rakes into all the filth of Antony's character; reproaches him with drunkenness and vomiting, and cowardice, and every sort of debauchery and villany. There is great genius and wit in many passages of this oration; but I think the whole turn of it would not now be generally admired.[1]

[1] Tytler's Life of Kames, i. 98, et seq.

In 1742, Hutcheson published his celebrated outline of a system of ethics, "Philosophiæ Moralis Institutio Compendiaria." The following letter contains Hume's remarks on the work; and to render them more intelligible, the passages he had particularly in view are printed in notes. It is not, however, as pieces of detached criticism, so much as in the character of an elucidation of those features of his own system in which it differs from that of Hutcheson, that the letter is valuable. It is an argument for the utilitarian system of morality—an argument that there is no *summum bonum* which should be the object of moral conduct, apart from the good of the human species.

HUME *to* FRANCIS HUTCHESON.

"DEAR SIR, — I received your very agreeable present, for which I esteem myself much obliged to you. I think it needless to express to you my esteem of the performance, because both the solidity of your judgment, and the general approbation your writings meet with, instruct you sufficiently what opinion you ought to form of them. Though your good nature might prompt you to encourage me by some praises, the same reason has not place with me, however justice might require them of me. Will not this prove that justice and good nature are not the same? I am surprised you should have been so diffident about your Latin. I have not wrote any in that language these many years, and cannot pretend to judge of particular words and phrases. But the turn of the whole seems to me very pure, and even easy and elegant.

"I have subjoined a few reflections, which occurred to me in reading over the book. By these I pretend

only to show you how much I thought myself obliged to you for the pains you took with me in a like case, and how willing I am to be grateful.

"P. 9, l. *ult. et quæ seq.*[1] These instincts you mention seem not always to be violent and impetuous, more than self-love or benevolence. There is a calm ambition, a calm anger or hatred, which, though calm, may likewise be very strong, and have the absolute command over the mind. The more absolute they are, we find them to be commonly the calmer. As these instincts may be calm without being weak, so self-love may likewise become impetuous and disturbed, especially where any great pain or pleasure approaches.

"P. 21. l. 11.[2] In opposition to this, I shall cite a fine writer,—not for the sake of his authority, but for

[1] Ab his animi motibus purioribus, et tranquillo stabilique suae beatitudinis appetitione, quae ratione utitur duce, diversi plane sunt motus quidam vehementiores et perturbati, quibus, secundum naturae suae legem, saepe agitatur mens, ubi certa species ipsi obversatur, atque bruto quodam impetu, fertur ad quaedam agenda, prosequenda, aut fugienda, quamvis nondum, adhibita in consilium ratione, secum statuerat haec ad vitam facere vel beatam vel miseram. Hos motus quisque intelliget, qui, in se descendens, in memoriam revocaverit quali animi impetu fuerat abreptus, quae passus, quum libidine, ambitione, ira, odio, invidia, amore, laetitia, aut metu, agitabatur; etiam ubi nihil de earum rerum, quae mentem commoverant, cursu ad vitam beatam aut miseram serio cogitarat. Quid quod saepe in partes contrarias distineantur et distrahantur homines, cum aliud cupido, mens vero, ejusque appetitus tranquillus, aliud suadeat.

[2] Diximus ex virtutis comprobatione ardentiorem efflorescere amorem, in eos qui virtute videntur praediti. Quumque in omnes suas vires, affectiones, sensus, vota, appetitiones, reflectere possit mens, eaque contemplari; ille ipse decori et honesti sensus acrior, ardentior virtutis appetitio, et honestiorum omnium amor et caritas, omnino comprobabitur; neque ulla animi affectio magis, quam optimi cujusque dilectiones et caritates.

the fact, which you may have observed. 'Les hommes comptent presque pour rien toutes les vertus du cœur, et idolâtrent les talens du corps et de l'esprit: celui qui dit froidement de soi, et sans croire blesser la modestie, qu'il est bon, qu'il est constant, fidèle, sincère, équitable, reconnoissant, n'ose dire qu'il est vif, qu'il a les dents belles et la peau douce: cela est trop fort.'—*La Bruyere.*[1]

"I fancy, however, this author stretches the matter too far. It seems arrogant to pretend to genius or magnanimity, which are the most shining qualities a man can possess. It seems foppish and frivolous to pretend to bodily accomplishments. The qualities of the heart lie in a medium; and are neither so shining as the one, nor so little valued as the other. I suppose the reason why good nature is not more valued, is its commonness, which has a vast effect on all our sentiments. Cruelty and hardness of heart is the most detested of all vices. I always thought you limited too much your ideas of virtue; and I find I have this opinion in common with several that have a very high esteem for your philosophy.

"P. 30, l. *antepen. et quæ seq.*[2] You seem here to

[1] See *Caractéres Ch.* 11. De L'homme.

[2] Qui multiplicem sensuum horum perspexerit varietatem, quibus res adeo dispares hominibus commendantur appetendae; animique propensiones pariter multiplices, et mutabiles; et inter se saepe pugnantes appetitus, et desideria, quibus suam quisque insequitur utilitatem, eamque variam, aut non minus variam voluptatem; eam etiam ingenii humanitatem, affectionesque benignas multiplices; humana huic natura prima specie videbitur, chaos quoddam, rudisque rerum non bene junctarum moles, nisi altius repetendo, nexum quendam, et ordinem a natura constitutum, et principatum deprehenderit, aut ἡγημονικὸν aliquod, ad modum caeteris ponendum idoneum. Philosophiae munus et hoc investigare, atque monstrare qua demum ratione haec sint ordinanda; miro enim artificio

Hanc Deus, et melior litem natura diremit.

embrace Dr. Butler's opinion in his "Sermons on Human Nature," that our moral sense has an authority distinct from its force and durableness; and that because we always think it *ought* to prevail. But this is nothing but an instinct or principle, which approves of itself upon reflection, and that is common to all of them. I am not sure that I have not mistaken your sense, since you do not prosecute this thought.

"P. 52. l. 1. I fancy you employ the epithet *ærumnosam*[1] more from custom than your settled opinion.

"P. 129, *et quæ seq.*[2] You sometimes, in my opinion, ascribe the original of property and justice to public benevolence, and sometimes to private benevolence towards the possessors of the goods; neither of which seem to me satisfactory. You know my opinion on this head. It mortifies me much to see a person who possesses more candour and penetration than any almost I know, condemn reasonings of which I imagine I see so strongly the evidence. I was going to blot out this after having wrote it, but hope you will consider it only as a piece of folly, as indeed it is.

"P. 244, l. 7.[3] You are so much afraid to derive any thing of virtue from artifice or human conventions, that you have neglected what seems to me the most

[1] Hanc vitam caducam et aerumnosam.

[2] The chapter *De Dominii acquirendi Rationibus.*

[3] De nuptiis consanguineorum in linea transversa, quas adferunt rationes viri docti, vix quisquam affirmant. Quia vero apud plurimas gentes legis Judaicae ignaras, ejusmodi nuptiae habebantur impurae et nefariae, credibile est et eas in prima mundi aetate lege aliqua positiva, cujus diu manserunt vestigia, fuisse a Deo vetitas. Ea autem lex hoc praecipue spectasse videtur, ut plures familiae gentesque ea devinciantur caritate et benevolentia, quae ex affinitate et sanguinis conjunctione oriri solet. Alia forte commoda hominibus nascituris prospexit Deus, ex eo quod gentes variae, conjugiis inter se misceantur.

satisfactory reason, viz. lest near relations, having so many opportunities in their youth, might debauch each other, if the least encouragement or hope was given to these desires, or if they were not easily repressed by an artificial horror inspired against them.

"P. 263, l. 14. As the phrase is true Latin, and very common, it seemed not to need an apology, as when necessity obliges one to employ modern words.[1]

"P. 266, l. 18, *et quæ seq.*[2] You imply a condemnation of Locke's opinion, which, being the received one, I could have wished the condemnation had been more express.

"These are the most material things that occurred to me upon a perusal of your ethics. I must own I am pleased to see such just philosophy, and such instructive morals to have once set their foot in the schools. I hope they will next get into the world, and then into the churches.

Nil desperandum, Teucro duce et auspice Teucro.

"*Edinr. Jan.* 10, 1743."

Among the Scottish gentry of Hume's day, there were many men of high education and accomplishments; and the glimpses we occasionally obtain into the society which he frequented, show us a circle possessing a much less provincial tone than later times would probably

[1] This is in reference to the word *despotica* being put in italics as a modern barbarism.

[2] Civium quisque non sibi solum, verum et liberis, a civitate defensionem stipulatur, et omnia vitae civilis commoda. Liberis gestum est negotium utilissimum; unde citra suum consensum, ad ea omnia pro ipsorum viribus, facienda praestanda adstringuntur, quae ob istiusmodi commoda ab adultis jure flagitari poterant. Nihil autem aequius quam ut singuli, pro virili parte, eam tueantur civitatem, neque ab ea intempestive discedant, cujus beneficio diu protecti, innumeris potiti fuerant vitae excultae commodis; utque haec a majoribus accepta ad posteros transmittant.

have exhibited in the same class. The notion that a university was a seat of learning, where the scholarship of all the world should meet, and not a provincial school, still lingered in our country, and prompted the gentry to educate their sons abroad. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the registers of the universities of Paris, Bourgès, Bologna, and Leyden, were crowded with familiar Scottish names, whom we find holding as great a proportion among the teachers as among the learners; and thus a Wilson, a Barclay, a Bellenden, a Jack, and many others, whose fame hardly reached their native country, are conspicuous among the literary ornaments of the foreign universities. It is perhaps in a great measure to the lingering continuance of this practice through part of the eighteenth century, that we may attribute the learning and accomplishments of the society in Scotland during that period.[1]

"Many are poets who have never penned their inspiration, and perchance the best." Many also are philosophers who have never either penned their philosophy, or put it into shape in their own minds. The two operations of induction and analysis proceed in every human mind with more or less success; but it is only when literary ambition, or pecuniary necessity, or the desire to head a system, prompts a man to collect and put into shape their results, that

[1] The practice of sending young men to the continental universities, seems to have continued for a longer time in the north than in the south. Within these few years it was not uncommon north of the Grampians, to meet with elderly country gentlemen, recalling to each other the memorable events of their student life at Leyden. The practice appears to be reviving in a favour for the German universities; but perhaps it is now more frequently followed by the commercial classes than by the country gentlemen.

they are given to the world. Instances have occurred in which they have appeared very nearly in their raw unwrought form. Thus, Tucker's "Light of Nature" is nothing more than the reflections of an English country gentleman, collected and strung together. Paley and Reid used them as if they had themselves gone through the operation, and put the results into shape; while the late William Hazlitt was at the pains of writing an abridgment of the book. It was fortunate for philosophy that these disconnected observations and thoughts were collected and preserved. And the reflection leads to the recollection of the quantity of valuable thoughts that any man, who notices the course of conversation around him, hears produced and dropped. In after-dinner social intercourse, in general verbal criticism of books or men, how much of the gold of true philosophy is scattered away with the dross; lost almost at the moment it is uttered, and forgotten both by hearer and speaker.

It is interesting to have so much of this valuable matter, as may have found its way into epistolary correspondence, preserved. The conversation of Hume's friends we have unfortunately lost, for there was no Boswell at his elbow. But their letters show how much of scholarship, and elegant literature, and philosophy slumbered in the minds of the Scottish gentry of that age; and assure us that in his intercourse with an Elliot, a Mure, an Edmonstone, an Elibank, a Macdonald, an Oswald, Hume was exchanging ideas with men not unworthy of literary fellowship with a mind even so highly cultivated as his own.

William Mure of Caldwell, who was in 1761 made a Baron of the Exchequer in Scotland, was among those who seem to have earliest secured and longest

retained Hume's esteem. The letters which passed between them are not often dated, but the circumstances under which many of them are written are attested by internal evidence. The following is one of the few which do not admit of being thus tested, but its merit is in a vein of quiet, easy, epistolary humour, rather than in its connexion with the events of the writer's life.

HUME *to* WILLIAM MURE *of Caldwell.*

"*September* 10.

"I made a pen, dipt it in ink, and set myself down in a posture of writing, before I had thought of any subject, or made provision of one single thought, by which I might entertain you. I trusted to my better genius that he would supply me in a case of such urgent necessity; but having thrice scratched my head, and thrice bit my nails, nothing presented itself, and I threw away my pen in great indignation. 'O! thou instrument of dulness,' says I, 'doest thou desert me in my greatest necessity? and, being thyself so false a friend, hast thou a secret repugnance at expressing my friendship to the faithful Mure, who knows thee too well ever to trust to thy caprices, and who never takes thee in his hand without reluctance. While I, miserable wretch that I am, have put my chief confidence in thee; and, relinquishing the sword, the gown, the cassock, and the toilette, have trusted to thee alone for my fortune and my fame. Begone! avaunt! Return to the goose from whence thou camest. With her thou wast of some use, while thou conveyedst her through the etherial regions. And why, alas! when plucked from her wing, and put into my hand, doest thou not recognise some similitude betwixt it and thy native soil, and render me the

same service, in aiding the flights of my heavy imagination?'

"Thus accused, the pen erected itself upon its point, placed itself betwixt my fingers and my thumb, and moved itself to and fro upon this paper, to inform you of the story, complain to you of my injustice, and desire your good offices to the reconciling such ancient friends. But not to speak nonsense any longer, (by which, however, I am glad I have already filled a page of paper,) I arrived here about three weeks ago, am in good health, and very deeply immersed in books and study. Tell your sister, Miss Betty, (after having made her my compliments,) that I am as grave as she imagines a philosopher should be,—laugh only once a fortnight, sigh tenderly once a week, but look sullen every moment. In short, none of Ovid's metamorphoses ever showed so absolute a change from a human creature into a beast; I mean, from a gallant into a philosopher.

"I doubt not but you see my Lord Glasgow very often, and therefore I shall suppose, when I write to one, I pay my respects to both. At least, I hope he will so far indulge my laziness. *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*

"Did you receive my letter from Glasgow? I hope it did not displease you. What are your resolutions with regard to that affair?

"Remember me to your sister, Miss Nancy, to Miss Dunlop, and to Mr. Leechman. Tell your mother, or sisters, or whoever is most concerned about the matter, that their cousin, John Steuart, is in England, and, as 'tis believed, will return with a great fortune.

I say not a word of Mr. Hutcheson, for fear you should think I intend to run the whole circle of my West-country acquaintance, and to make you a bearer

of a great many formal compliments. But I remember you all very kindly, and desire to be remembered by you, and to be spoke of sometimes, and to be wrote to."[1]

The following letter is in reference to Mr. Mure having been chosen member of Parliament for Renfrewshire as successor to Alexander Cunningham, on whose death a new writ was moved on 22d November, 1742. The advice which this letter offers to a young statesman, seems to be both sagacious and honest.

HUME *to* WILLIAM MURE *of Caldwell.*

"I have wrote to Mr. Oswald[2] by this post, in order to promote an intimacy and friendship betwixt you. I exhort you to persevere in your intention of cultivating a friendship with him. You cannot possibly find a man of more worth, of a gentler disposition, or better understanding. There are infinite advantages attending an intimacy with such persons; among which this is not the least, as far as I can judge by my own experience, that I always derive from it an additional motive to preserve my character for honour and integrity; because I know that nothing else can preserve their friendship. Should I give you an exhortation of this kind, you might think me very impertinent; though really you ought to ascribe it more to my friendship, than my diffidence. 'Tis impossible ever to think ourselves secure enough, where our concern is extremely great; and, though I dare be confident of your good conduct, as of my own, yet you must also allow me to be diffident of it, as I should be of my own. When I consider your disposition to virtue, cultivated by letters, together with

[1] MS. R.S.E. This letter is printed in the *Literary Gazette* for 1822, p. 635.

[2] Mr. Oswald of Dunnikier.

your moderation, I cannot doubt of your steadiness. The delicacy of the times does not diminish this assurance, but only dashes it with a few fears, which rise in me without my approbation, and against my judgment. Let a strict frugality be the guardian of your virtue; and preserve your frugality by a close application to business and study. Nothing would so effectually throw you into the lumber and refuse of the house as your departure from your engagements at this time; as a contrary behaviour will secure your own good opinion, and that of all mankind. These advantages are not too dearly purchased even by the loss of fortune, but it belongs to your prudence and frugality to procure them, without paying so dear a purchase for them. I say no more; and hope you will ascribe what I have said, not to the pedagogue, or even to the philosopher, but to the friend. I make profession of being such with regard to you; and desire you to consider me as such no longer than I shall appear to be a man of honour. Yours."

January 26.[1]

Among Hume's friends in early life, we find James Oswald of Dunnikier, who is mentioned in the foregoing letter—a name pretty well known in the political history of Scotland. He was elected member for the Kirkaldy district of burghs in 1741. He filled successively the situations of Commissioner of the Navy, Member of the Board of Trade, Lord of the Treasury, and Treasurer of Ireland. He was well read in the sources of literary information, and brought to his official duties a sagacious, practical understanding, which made him infinitely serviceable to the speculative labours of his two illustrious friends, Hume and

[1] MS. R.S.E. *Literary Gazette*, 1822, p. 635.

Smith. "I know," says Hume, "you are the most industrious and the most indolent man of my acquaintance; the former in business, the latter in ceremony."[1] We have occasional glimpses of philosophical rambles, not unmixed with a little conviviality, in which Oswald sometimes embarked with his speculative friends. "You will remember," he says, writing to Henry Home in 1742, "how your friend David Hume and you, used to laugh at a most sublime declamation I one night made, after a drunken expedition to Cupar, on the impotency of corruption in certain circumstances; how I maintained, that on certain occasions, men felt, or seemed to feel, a certain dignity in themselves, which made them disdain to act on sordid motives: and how I imagined it to be extremely possible, in such situations, that even the lowest of men might become superior to the highest temptations."[2] The political course which he afterwards adopted, however, was not precisely of this soaring cast, but savoured more of the school of practical expedients founded by Sir Robert Walpole. We shall afterwards have occasion to see his intercourse with Hume illustrated at greater length.

The following letter to Mure, contains a pretty sagacious division of the prominent political movements of the day, into those which a supporter of the court party would advocate, and those which he would oppose. Hume seems to have had some dread lest the spirit of what was then termed patriotism, might sway an inexperienced, young, and aspiring politician into devious paths, inconsistent with the straight road of duty and devotion to an adopted party. But Mure seems to have been a sagacious steady-minded man, not likely to be seduced out of the path he had chosen.

[1] Memorials of James Oswald, p. 82. [2] Ib. p. 19–20.

He was subsequently much relied on by Lord Bute, and rose to eminence and distinction as a Tory politician. The letter exhibits a playful practice of talking of his correspondents as his pupils, which Hume adopted sometimes with those who had least sympathy with his principles, unless they were clergymen, or otherwise likely to take the familiarity in bad part.

HUME *to* WILLIAM MURE *of Caldwell.*

"I am surprised you should find fault with my letter. For my part, I esteem it the best I ever wrote. There is neither barbarism, solecism, equivoque, redundancy, nor transgression of one single rule of grammar or rhetoric, through the whole. The words were chosen with an exact propriety to the sense, and the sense was full of masculine strength and energy. In short, it comes up fully to the Duke of Buckingham's description of fine writing,—*Exact propriety of words and thought.* This is more than what can be said of most compositions. But I shall not be redundant in the praise of brevity, though much might be said on that subject. To conclude all, I shall venture to affirm, that my last letter will be equal in bulk to all the orations you shall deliver, during the two first sessions of parliament. For, let all the letters of my epistle be regularly divided, they will be found equivalent to a dozen of *No's* and as many *Ay's.* There will be found a *No* for the triennial bill, for the pensiou bill, for the bill about regulating elections, for the bill of pains and penalties against Lord Orford, &c. There will also be found an Ay for the standing army,[1] for votes of credit, for the approbation of treaties, &c. As to the last *No* I

[1] This refers to the taking Hanoverian troops into British pay, warmly debated in the House of Commons on 10th December, 1742.

mentioned, with regard to Lord Orford, I beg it of you as a particular favour. For, having published to all Britain my sentiments on that affair, it will be thought by all Britain that I have no influence on you, if your sentiments be not conformable to mine. Besides, as you are my disciple in religion and morals, why should you not be so in politics? I entreat you to get the bill about witches repealed, and to move for some new bill to secure the Christian religion, by burning Deists, Socinians, Moralists, and Hutchinsonians.

"I shall be in town about Christmas, where, if I find not Lord Glasgow, I shall come down early in the spring to the borders of the Atlantic Ocean, and rejoice the Tritons and sea-gods with the prospect of Kelburn[1] in a blaze. For I find, that is the only way to unnestle his lordship. But I intend to use the freedom to write to himself on this subject, if you will tell me how to direct to him. In the meantime do you make use of all your eloquence and argument to that purpose.

"Make my humble compliments to the ladies, and tell them, I should endeavour to satisfy them, if they would name the subject of the essay they desire. For my part, I know not a better subject than themselves; if it were not, that being accused of being unintelligible in some of my writings, I should be extremely in danger of falling into that fault, when I should treat of a subject so little to be understood as women. I would, therefore, rather have them assign me the deiform fund of the soul, the passive unions of nothing with nothing, or any other of those mystical points, which I would endeavour to clear up, and render perspicuous to the meanest readers.

"Allow not Miss Dunlop to forget, that she has a

[1] The Earl of Glasgow's house, on the coast of Ayrshire.

humble servant, who has the misfortune to be divided from her, by the whole breadth of this island. I know she never forgets her friends; but, as I dare not pretend to that relation, upon so short an acquaintance, I must be beholden to your good offices for preserving me in her memory; because I suspect mightily that she is apt to forget and overlook those who can aspire no higher than the relation I first mentioned.

"This, I think, is enough in all conscience. I see you are tired with my long letter, and begin to yawn. What! can nothing satisfy you, and must you grumble at every thing? I hope this is a good prognostic of your being a patriot."[1]

"*Nov.* 14*th*."

In the course of these Memoirs there will be many occasions for exhibiting Hume's acquaintance with some of the most distinguished clergymen of his time, and the mutual esteem which he and they entertained towards each other. Among those members of the Presbyterian church, with whom he appears to have had the most early intercourse, we find the name of Dr. Leechman, who was his senior by about five years. They probably got acquainted with each other in the family of the Mures of Caldwell, where Leechman had been tutor to Hume's friend and correspondent. Whatever other jealousies or distastes may have occurred between them, it would be no drawback to their subsequent intimacy, that Leechman was by his marriage with Miss Balfour, the brother-in-law of one of Hume's most zealous controversial opponents, Mr. Balfour of Pilrig. Dr. Leechman was for many years professor of divinity in the university of Glasgow, of which he afterwards became principal.

[1] MS. R.S.E. *Literary Gazette*, 1822, p. 636.

His sermons, now little known, stood at one time in formidable rivalry with those of Blair. He appears to have been a man who united settled religious principles with a calm conscientious inquiring mind; and the account which his biographer, the Rev. James Wodrow, gives of his lectures, is characteristic of one who had too much respect for truth to hate or contemn any man engaged in purely metaphysical inquiries, whatever might be the opinions to which they led him. We are told, that "no dictatorial opinion, no infallible or decisive judgment on any great controverted point, was ever delivered from that theological chair. After the point had undergone a full discussion, none of the students yet knew the particular opinion of this venerable professor, in any other way than by the superior weight of the arguments which he had brought under their view; so delicately scrupulous was he to throw any bias at all upon ingenuous minds, in their inquiries after sacred truth." [1]

There is a letter by Hume to Baron Mure, containing a criticism on the composition and substance of a sermon by Dr. Leechman. From the general tenor of the letter, it would appear that the sermon was placed in Hume's hands that the author might have the advantage of his suggestions in preparing a second edition for the press. The criticisms on style and collocation are careful and minute, but they all indicate blemishes peculiar to the piece of composition before the critic, and suggest corresponding improvements; and none of them appear so far to illustrate any canon of criticism as to be intelligible to a

[1] Sermons by William Leechman, D.D. to which is prefixed some account of the author's life, and his character, by James Wodrow, D.D. 1789, i. 34.

reader who has not the sermon in his hands, in the same state as that in which it was inspected by Hume. These corrective annotations precede the following general remarks on the sermon and its subject. There may be seen in these remarks a desire, which haunts the whole of Hume's writings on kindred subjects; a desire to call forth argument and evidence in support of that side from which he himself feels inclined to dissent; like the unsatisfied feeling of one who would rather find refuge in the argumentative fortress of some other person, than remain a sceptical wanderer at his own free will.

HUME *to* WILLIAM MURE *of Caldwell.*

"These are all the minute faults I could observe in the sermon. Mr. Leechman has a very clear and manly expression; but, in my humble opinion, he does not consult his ear enough, nor aim at a style which may be smooth and harmonious, which, next to perspicuity, is the chief ornament of style; *vide* Cicero, Quinctilian, Longinus, &c. &c. &c. If this sermon were not a popular discourse, I should also think it might be made more concise.

"As to the argument, I could wish Mr. Leechman would, in the second edition, answer this objection both to devotion and prayer, and indeed to every thing we commonly call religion, except the practice of morality, and the assent of the understanding to the proposition *that God exists.*

"It must be acknowledged, that nature has given us a strong passion of admiration for whatever is excellent, and of love and gratitude for whatever is benevolent and beneficial; and that the Deity possesses these attributes in the highest perfection: and yet I assert, he is not the natural object of any passion or

affection. He is no object either of the senses or imagination, and very little of the understanding, without which it is impossible to excite any affection. A remote ancestor, who has left us estates and honours acquired with virtue, is a great benefactor; and yet 'tis impossible to bear him any affection, because unknown to us: though in general we know him to be a man or a human creature, which brings him vastly nearer our comprehension than an invisible, infinite spirit. A man, therefore, may have his heart perfectly well disposed towards every proper and natural object of affection—friends, benefactors, country, children, &c. —and yet, from this circumstance of the invisibility and incomprehensibility of the Deity, may feel no affection towards him. And, indeed, I am afraid that all enthusiasts mightily deceive themselves. Hope and fear perhaps agitate their breast when they think of the Deity; or they degrade him into a resemblance with themselves, and by that means render him more comprehensible. Or they exult with vanity in esteeming themselves his peculiar favourites; or at best they are actuated by a forced and strained affection, which moves by starts and bounds, and with a very irregular, disorderly pace. Such an affection cannot be required of any man as his duty. Please to observe, that I not only exclude the turbulent passions, but the calm affections. Neither of them can operate without the assistance of the senses and imagination; or at least a more complete knowledge of the object than we have of the Deity. In most men this is the case; and a natural infirmity can never be a crime. But, secondly, were devotion never so much admitted, prayer must still be excluded. First, the addressing of our virtuous wishes and desires to the Deity, since the address has no influence on him, is only a kind of

rhetorical figure, in order to render these wishes more ardent and passionate. This is Mr. Leechman's doctrine. Now, the use of any figure of speech can never be a duty. Secondly, this figure, like most figures of rhetoric, has an evident impropriety in it; for we can make use of no expression, or even thought, in prayers and entreaties, which does not imply that these prayers have an influence. Thirdly, this figure is very dangerous, and leads directly, and even unavoidably, to impiety and blasphemy. 'Tis a natural infirmity of men to imagine that their prayers have a direct influence; and this infirmity must be extremely fostered and encouraged by the constant use of prayer. Thus, all wise men have excluded the use of images and pictures in prayer, though they certainly enliven devotion; because 'tis found by experience, that with the vulgar these visible representations draw too much towards them, and become the only objects of devotion." [1]

The literary history of this sermon is curious and instructive. When its author received his appointment of professor of divinity in 1744, a party in the church opposed his being admitted in the usual manner as a member of the presbytery of Glasgow; and one of their methods of attack was to charge him with heretical opinions, promulgated in this sermon, of which the first edition had been then published. It is singular enough, in comparing their charge with Hume's criticism, to find the two attacks brought against the same point, though with different weapons. "The purport of the whole went to charge Mr. Leechman with having laid too little stress on the merit of the satisfaction and intercession of our blessed Saviour,

[1] MS. R.S.E.

as the sole ground of our acceptance with God in prayer, and with teaching Christians to look for pardon and acceptance on other grounds than this." [1]

At this time, we find Hume making an effort to obtain a professorship in Edinburgh. Dr. Pringle, subsequently Sir John Pringle, and President of the Royal Society of London,—

> "Who sat in Newton's chair,
> And wonder'd how the devil he got there,"—

held the chair of "ethics and pneumatic philosophy" [2] in the university of Edinburgh. In 1742, he was appointed physician to the Earl of Stair, commander of the British troops in the Low Countries; and through this circumstance it will be seen, from the following letter, that Hume contemplated a vacancy, and that he was employing the usual means for securing his own appointment to the chair.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell.*

"Dear Will,—I shall tell you how my affair stands. Dr. Pringle has been absent two years by allowance, and about six weeks ago wrote a letter to the provost, in which he seemed in a manner to have resigned his office; and desired the council, if they thought the university any way a sufferer by his absence, to send him over a resignation in form, which he would sign, and then they might proceed to the choice of a successor. Mr. Couts,[3] upon receiving this, mentioned me to several of the council, and desired me to mention myself as a

[1] Memoir, *ut supra*, p. 23.

[2] Pneumatic Philosophy must here be taken in its old sense, as meaning Psychology.

[3] John Couts or Coutts, a native of Dundee, at that time Lord Provost of Edinburgh. He was the father of Thomas Coutts, the celebrated banker.

candidate to all my friends; not with a view of soliciting or making interest, but in order to get the public voice on my side, that he might with the more assurance employ his interest in my behalf. I accordingly did so; and being allowed to make use of the provost's name, I found presently that I should have the whole council on my side, and that, indeed, I should have no antagonist. But when the provost produced the doctor's letter to the council, he discovered that he had in secret wrote differently to some of his friends, who still insisted that the town should give him allowance to be absent another year. The whole council, however, except two or three, exclaimed against this proposal, and it appeared evidently, that if the matter had been put to a vote, there would have been a majority of ten to one against the doctor. But Mr. Couts, though his authority be quite absolute in the town, yet makes it a rule to govern them with the utmost gentleness and moderation: and this good maxim he sometimes pushes even to an extreme. For the sake of unanimity, therefore, he agrees to an expedient, started by one of the doctor's friends, which he thought would be a compliment to the doctor, and yet would serve the same purpose as the immediate declaration of a vacancy in the office. This expedient was to require either the doctor's resignation, or a declaration upon honour, that whether it were peace or war, or in any event, he would against November, 1745, return to his office, and resign his commission of physician to the army, or any other employment incompatible with his attendance in this place. This last condition, Mr. Couts thinks it impossible he will comply with, because he has a guinea a-day at present, as physician to the army, along with a good deal of business and half-pay during life. And there seems

at present to be small chance for a peace before the term here assigned. I find, however, that some are of a contrary opinion; and particularly several of the doctor's friends say that he will sign the obligation above-mentioned. We shall receive his answer in a fortnight, upon which my success seems entirely to depend.

"In the mean time, I have received another offer, which I shall tell you as a friend, but desire you may not mention to any body. My Lord Garlees[1] received a commission from Mr. Murray of Broughton[2] to look out for a travelling tutor to his son, who is at present at Glasgow. My lord inclines to give me the preference, but I could not positively accept, till I had seen the end of this affair, which is so near a crisis. Please to inform me of any particulars that you know with regard to the young man, his family, &c., that in case the former project fail, I may deliberate upon the other. The accusation of heresy, deism, scepticism, atheism, &c. &c. &c., was started against me; but never took, being bore down by the contrary authority of all the good company in town. But what surprised me extremely, was to find that this accusation was supported by the pretended authority of Mr. Hutcheson and even Mr. Leechman, who, 'tis said, agreed that I was a very unfit person for such an office. This appears to me absolutely incredible, especially with regard to the latter gentleman. For, as to Mr. Hutcheson, all my friends think that he has

[1] The title of courtesy of the eldest son of the Earl of Galloway.

[2] There were two Murrays of Broughton. The one had a small piece of property in Tweeddale, between Noblehouse and Moffat; and soon after the date of this letter acquired an infamous celebrity by giving evidence against the rebels, after having acted as secretary to the Pretender. The other, who was probably the person Hume had in view, had a considerable estate in Galloway.

been rendering me bad offices to the utmost of his power. And I know that Mr. Couts, to whom I said rashly that I thought I could depend upon Mr. Hutcheson's friendship and recommendation,—I say, Mr. Couts now speaks of that professor rather as my enemy than as my friend. What can be the meaning of this conduct in that celebrated and benevolent moralist, I cannot imagine. I shall be glad to find, for the honour of philoscphy, that I am mistaken: and, indeed, I hope so too; and beg of you to inquire a little into the matter, but very cautiously, lest I make him my open and professed enemy, which I would willingly avoid. Here then it behoves you to be very discreet.

"'Tis probable Mr. Murray of Broughton may consult Mr. Hutcheson and the other professors of Glasgow, before he fix absolutely on a tutor for his son. We shall then see whether he really entertains a bad opinion of my orthodoxy, or is only unwilling that I should be Professor of Ethics in Edinburgh; lest that town, being in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, should spread its contagion all around it, and even infect the students of the latter university.

"I have passed a week with Mr. Oswald at Kirkcaldy. He makes his compliments to you. He has shown me the whole economy of the navy, the source of the navy debt, with many other branches of public business. He seems to have a great genius for these affairs, and I fancy will go far in that way if he perseveres."

"*Edinburgh, August* 4, 1744."[1]

It may easily be imagined that both Mr. Hutcheson and Dr. Leechman would be opposed to the appoint-

[1] MS. R.S.E.

ment of David Hume as a teacher of moral philosophy in one of the universities; and that they might entertain this opinion along with an honest admiration of his character, and an appreciation of the value of his talents when exercised in another sphere. It is at all events gratifying to find, that whatever opposition Hutcheson may have made, he was influenced by no sordid motive, as he was offered the chair, and refused it. On 27th March, 1745, a letter in which Dr. Pringle resigned the chair, was read to the Town Council. On 3d April, a nomination to the chair was transmitted to Hutcheson.[1] He declined the honour, in a rather verbose letter, in which he speaks in the tone of one whose tenure of life cannot be expected to be strong enough to fit him for new labours: yet he was then only fifty years old. His death occurred two years later, and he probably felt that his long series of intellectual labours had exhausted too much of the stamina of life to leave him the prospect of a successful career in a new sphere of duty. On Hutcheson's letter being read to the council, on 10th April, 1745, the minutes bear, that "several other persons having been named as proper candidates, it was thereupon moved in council, whether to proceed to take the ministers' avisamentum betwixt and next council day, in order to facilitate their choice, or to delay the same for a month or six weeks, so that the members of council might with the greater leisure deliberate thereanent; and the rolls having thereupon been called, and the vote marked, it carried delay for said space."

It is probable that the "ministers' avisamentum," whatever may be precisely designed by that phrase,

[1] Town Council Records, where he is called George Hutcheson, instead of Francis.

was not such a recommendation as would turn the minds of the members of council in favour of Hume. His name is not mentioned in the council records in connexion with the proceedings, and the vacancy was filled up on 5th June, 1745, by the appointment of William Cleghorn, who had acted for Dr. Pringle in his absence.

The date of these transactions, brings us into the middle of a very curious episode in Hume's history, which must now be examined.

CHAPTER V.

1745—1747. ÆT. 34—36.

Hume's Residence with the Marquis of Annandale—His Predecessor Colonel Forrester—Correspondence with Sir James Johnstone and Mr. Sharp of Hoddam—Quarrel with Captain Vincent—Estimate of his Conduct, and Inquiry into the Circumstances in which he was placed—Appointed Secretary to General St. Clair—Accompanies the expedition against the Court of France as Judge-Advocate—Gives an Account of the Attack on Port L'Orient—A tragic Incident.

HUME'S history of his residence with the Marquis of Annandale, is given in the following brief terms, in his "own life." "In 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England: I found, also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune."

It might have been favourable perhaps to the dignity of his position in the world of letters, that this episode in his history had never been more fully nar-

rated; for a philosopher conducting a litigation for £75 of arrears of salary, is apt to experience that diminution of respect in the eyes of the public, which the prince of Condé discovered that a hero suffered in those of his valet. Since, however, many statements have been given to the world, connected with that part of Hume's life, and many charges and counter-charges among the persons connected with it are preserved, it is necessary to give such a brief view of the whole affair, as may enable the reader to estimate the respective merits of the parties in the dispute. A collection of documents on the subject was lately published by a gentleman to whom the literary history of Scotland is indebted for many other services;[1] and from his book the following statement is compiled.

The person with whom David Hume was thus connected was the last Marquis of Annandale, on whose death that title became dormant. On the 5th of March, 1748, he was found, on an inquest from the Court of Chancery in England, to be a lunatic, incapable of governing himself and managing his own affairs, and to have been so since 12th December, 1744, a few months anterior to Hume's engagement with him. The correspondence does not give the

[1] Letters of David Hume, and extracts from letters referring to him, edited by Thomas Murray, LL.D., author of "The Literary History of Galloway." Edinburgh, 1841, 8vo, pp. 80. Dr. Murray says of these letters: "The originals are supposed to have been deposited, about eighty years ago, in the hands of a legal gentleman in Edinburgh, as documents for a law-suit, to which the latter portion of them refers. Since his death, they have, we believe, passed through several hands without having attracted any particular attention, or, perhaps, without having ever been read. They ultimately came into the possession of a gentleman who appreciated their value, and who, several years ago, did me the honour of presenting them unconditionally to me."

reader the notion of one reduced to so abject a mental state, but rather that of a man nervously timid and reserved; distrustful of himself and his ability to transact business with other people, but not quite incapable of managing his affairs, though exciteable, and liable to be driven into fits of passion by causes not susceptible of being anticipated. A party to the correspondence, talking of him as in an improved condition, says:-"My Lord walked out with me lately two or three miles, received and returned the compliments of the hat of those we met, and without any shyness or reserve: and bears to stand by, and hear me talk with any farmer or countryman. This is a vast change for the better, and the greatest appearance that it will continue."[1] He appears to have been haunted by a spirit of literary ambition. Hume says in a letter to Lord Elibank, "I have copied out half a dozen of epigrams, which I hope will give you entertainment. The thought in them is indeed little inferior to that in the celebrated Epigrams of Rousseau; though the versification be not so correct. What a pity! I say this on account both of the author and myself; for I am afraid I must leave him." And on another occasion he alludes at length

[1] The Marquis is said to have afforded the first example of his state of mind, in the manner in which he gave a ball at Dumfries. He had the floor covered with confections, as a garden walk is laid with gravel. A lady who was alive a few years ago, remembered having seen him walking about at Highgate, near London; when he was probably in a more confirmed state of insanity than even his intercourse with Hume exhibits: a keeper walked before him, and a footman behind. The latter would occasionally tap his Lordship on the shoulder, and hand him a snuff-box, whence he would take a pinch. He was a very handsome man. He had a sister, who exercised so much influence over him, that in her presence a keeper could be dispensed with.

to a far more extensive literary achievement, a novel, which the excited Marquis had written, and which those about him had found it necessary to print, circulating a few copies, and advertising it in one newspaper to allay any suspicions in the author's mind that a thousand copies had not been printed. Hume says:

"You would certainly be a little surprised and vexed on receiving a printed copy of the novel, which was in hands when you left London. If I did not explain the mystery to you, I believe I told you, that I hoped that affair was entirely over, by my employing Lord Marchmont and Lord Bolingbroke's authority against publishing that novel; though you will readily suppose that neither of these two noble Lords ever perused it. This machine operated for six weeks; but the vanity of the author returned with redoubled force, fortified by suspicions, and increased by the delay. 'Pardie,' dit il, 'je crois que ces messieurs veulent être les seules Seigneurs d'Angleterre qui eussent de l'esprit. Mais je leur montrerai ce que le petit A—— peut faire aussi.' In short, we were obliged to print off thirty copies, to make him believe that we had printed a thousand, and that they were to be dispersed all over the kingdom.

"My Lady Marchioness will also receive a copy, and I am afraid it may give her a good deal of uneasiness, by reason of the story alluded to in the novel, and which she may imagine my Lord is resolved to bring to execution. Be so good, therefore, as to inform her, that I hope this affair is all over. I discovered, about a fortnight ago, that one of the papers sent to that damsel had been sent back by her under cover to his rival, Mr. M'——, and that she had plainly, by that step, sacrificed him to her other lover. This was real matter of fact, and I had the

good fortune to convince him of it; so that his pride seems to have got the better of his passion, and he never talks of her at present."

The "novel" appears to have referred to some little event in its author's private history. If there be a copy of it now any where existing, it is to be feared that it wastes its fragrance on the desert air, as the existence of so choice a flower of literature, were it in the possession of any collector, could not fail to have been rumoured through the bibliographical world.

The Marquis had previously been attended by a succession of hired companions, of whom one was a man of considerable distinction, Colonel James Forrester,[1] a person who, in the Scottish society of the age, seems to have united some of the qualities of a Chesterfield to a like proportion of those of a Beau

[1] The following, discovered by a friend in an old newspaper, is so amusing, and so descriptive of the man who was Hume's predecessor in office, that I cannot resist inserting it: —

On CAPTAIN (BEAU) FORRESTER'S *travelling to the Highlands of Scotland in winter, anno* 1727, *incog.*

O'ER Caledonia's ruder Alps
While Forrester pursu'd his way,
The mountains veil'd their rugged scalps,
And wrapt in snow and wonder lay!

Each sylvan god, each rural power,
Peep'd out to see the raree-show;
And all confess'd, that, till that hour,
They ne'er had seen so bright a beau.

Nay yet, and more I dare advance,
The story true as aught in print,
All nature round, in complaisance,
And imitation, took the hint.

The fields that whilome only bore
Wild heath, or clad at best with oats,
Despis'd these humble weeds, and wore
Rich spangled doublets, and lac'd coats.

Fielding. He was the author of "The Polite Philosopher;" a lively little essay, sometimes published along with Chesterfield's "Advice," in which the author is so much at ease with his reader, that he discourses in prose or poetry as his own humour dictates. Johnson said, with reference to the man and the book, that "he was himself the great polite he drew;" and if it did not happen that his coxcombry excited the poor invalid's irritable nerves to distraction, he was probably an infinitely more suitable man for the office of companion to the Marquis of Annandale, than David Hume.

The overtures to Hume were made by the Marquis himself; who was, according to an expression used by Sir James Johnstone, when writing to Hume, "charmed with something contained in his Essays." The place of residence of the Marquis was Weldhall, near St. Alban's, in Hertfordshire. Hume had to go to London to make the anticipatory arrangements, and he commenced his companionship on 1st April, 1745. The insurrection, headed by Prince Charles Edward in Scotland, commenced four months

The hills were periwigg'd with snow;
Pig-tails of ice hung on each tree;
The winds turn'd powder-puffs; and, lo,
On every shrub a sharp toupee!

With silver clocks the river gods
Appear'd; and some will take their oath,
Or lay at least a thousand odds,
The clouds saliving spit white froth.

The youth abash'd thus to survey
So rude a scene himself outdo,
His sprightly genius to display,
Resolv'd on something odd and new:

All things he found were grown genteel,
Which made him deem it a-propos,
To be alone in dishabile,
A Forrester, and not a beau.

Edinburgh Courant, Oct. 3, 1781.

afterwards; and there is perhaps nothing more curious in the whole dispute than the indifference with which this matter, fraught with so much importance to his countrymen, is spoken of by Hume; while there could not probably be a better answer to those who afterwards insinuated that he was a Jacobite, than an account of the manner in which his thoughts were occupied during that struggle. He occasionally complains that he is prevented from personally discussing, with the individuals interested, the matters he is writing about, on account of "the present unhappy troubles;" and the following portion of a letter to Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, the brother of the Marquis's stepfather, written immediately after he had left his attendance on the Marquis, is the only occasion in which he appears to show the least sympathy in the conflict or its results.

"*Portsmouth, June* 6, 1746.

"DEAR SIR,—I have always sympathized very cordially with you, whenever I met with any of the names, wherein you was interested, in any of the public papers; but I hope that one of the persons is now safe by his escape, and the other protected by her sex and innocence.[1] We live not now in a time, when public crimes are supposed to cancel all private ties, or when the duties of relation, even though executed beyond the usual bounds, will render the

[1] The baronet's daughter, Margaret, had married the Earl of Airley's eldest son, Lord Ogilvy, who, having engaged in the rebellion, had fled to the continent after the battle of Culloden. His wife, however, was among the prisoners; and in June 1746, she was committed to Edinburgh Castle. In the ensuing November she escaped; and having joined her husband in France, she died there, in 1757, at the age of thirty-three. *Douglas's Peerage of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 35.

persons criminal. I am willing, therefore, to flatter myself, that your anxiety must now be in a great measure over, and that a more happy conclusion of so calamitous an affair could not be expected, either for private individuals or for the public. Some little time ago, we had here a conversation with regard to L——, and other persons in her condition, when General St. Clair said, that he heard, from some of the ministers, that the intentions of the menaces, or even of the intended prosecutions (if they went so far,) were not to proceed to execution; but only to teach our countrywomen (many of whom had gone beyond all bounds) that their sex was no absolute protection to them, and that they were equally exposed to the law with the other sex. However, I doubt not but your friend has no occasion for their clemency, whatever may be the case with the other ladies in the same situation, who had particularly valued themselves upon their activity and courage."

It is now necessary to enter on a subject, which one feels a natural inclination to postpone, as long as the order of events will afford any excuse for looking at other things: the treatment Hume experienced in this his self-adopted slavery. He had to deal with a capricious unreasonable employer; to that he would, in the circumstances, philosophically reconcile himself. He states in one of his letters, that he lived with him "in a more equal way of complaisance and good humour than could well have been expected. Some little disgusts and humours could not be prevented, and never were proposed to be of any consequence." But he had another and a far more unpleasant person to deal with, in a certain Philip Vincent, a captain

in the navy,[1] a relation of the Dowager-marchioness of Annandale. For some months matters appear to have gone smoothly with all concerned. The following letter to one of his esteemed friends, shows that Hume was consoling himself for the probable dissipation of his hopes of a professorship, by reflecting on his good fortune in being connected with so amiable and excellent a man as Captain Vincent:—

HUME *to* MATTHEW SHARP *of Hoddam.*[2]

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am informed that such a popular clamour has been raised against me in Edinburgh, on account of scepticism, heterodoxy, and other hard names, which confound the ignorant, that my friends find some difficulty, in working out the point of my professorship, which once appeared so easy. Did I need a testimonial for my orthodoxy, I should certainly appeal to you; for you know that I always imitated Job's friends, and defended the cause of Providence when [you] attacked it, on account of the headachs you felt after a deba[uch.] But, as a more particular explication of that particular seems superfluous, I shall only apply to you for a renewal of

[1] He had obtained this rank in 1729. Beatson's Political Index.

[2] Matthew Sharp, born 18th Feb. 1693, was the second son of John Sharp of Hoddam, by his wife Susan, daughter of John Muir of Cassencarrie, ancestor of Sir John Muir Mackenzie of Delvin, Bart. Mr. Sharp joined the Jacobite insurgents in the year 1715, and made his escape to Scotland, after the rout at Preston, in the disguise of a pig-driver. He then repaired to France, where he finally took up his residence at Boulogne. In the year 1740 his elder brother George died, and Mr. Sharp succeeded to the estate of Hoddam. He returned to his native country, and died, unmarried, at Hoddam castle, in the year 1769.

TO MATHEW SEARIE OF HOLDAM ESQ. NEAR PERTHIES, NORTH BRITAIN.

My Dear Sir

I am informd, that such a particular Clamour has been raised against me in Edinburgh, on account of [illegible]ticism, ~~[illegible]~~ Heterodoxy & other hard Names, which confound the [illegible]rant, that my Friends find some Difficulty in working out the Pri[illegible] my Professorship, which one appeard so easy. Did I need a [illegible]monial for my Orthodoxy I should certainly appeal to you. For [illegible] know that I always im:itated Job's Friends, & defended the Ca[illegible] of Providence when [illegible]tacks it on account of the Head ac[illegible] you felt after a Deba[illegible] But as a more particular Explication [illegible] that particular seems super:fluous I shall only apply to you, [illegible] Renewal of your good Office with ~~[illegible]~~ your Nephew Lord Tenn[illegible] whose Interest with Yetts & Allan may be of Service to me. [illegible] is no Time to lose; so that I must beg you to be speedy in writing [illegible] him or speaking to him on that head. A word to the Wise. Even [illegible] is not necessary to a Friend such as I have always esteemd & found [illegible] to be.

I live here very comfortably with the Marquess of Annandale, who I suppose you have heard. Sent me a Letter of Invitation, along with ~~[illegible]~~ a Bill of 100 L about ~~[illegible]~~ two Months ago. Every thing is much better than I expected from the Accounts I ~~[illegible]~~ heard after I came to Lon:don. For the Secrecy, with which I stole away from Edinr, & which I thought necessary for preserving my Interest, then kept me entirely ig:norant of his Situation. My Lord never was in so good a Way [illegible] He has a regular Family, honest Servants, & every thing is [illegible]neg'd genteely & with Oeconomy. He has entrusted all his English Affairs to a mighty honest friendly Man, Capt Vincent, who is Cousin Germain to the ~~Marquess~~ Marchioness. And as my Lord has now taken as strong a Turn to Solitude & Repose as he formerly had to Company & Agitation, tis to be hopd that his good Parts & excellent Dispositions may at last being accompany'd with more Health & Tranquillity, render him a Comfort to his Friends, if not an Ornament to his Country. As you live in the Neighbourhood of the Marchioness, it may give her a Pleasure to hear these parti:culars. I am Dear Sir

Your most affectionate humble Servt
David Hume

Welde. his near St Albans.
April. 24 1745.

your good offices with your nephew, Lord Tinwal,[1] whose interest with Yetts and Allan may be of service to me. There is no time to lose; so that I must beg you to be speedy in writing to him, or speaking to him on that head. A word to the wise. Even that is not necessary to a friend, such as I have always esteemed and found you to be.

"I live here very comfortably with the Marquis of Annandale, who, I suppose you have heard, sent me a letter of invitation, along with a bill of one hundred pounds, about two months ago. Every thing is much better than I expected, from the accounts I heard after I came to London; for the secrecy with which I stole away from Edinburgh, and which I thought necessary for preserving my interest there, kept me entirely ignorant of his situation.

"My lord never was in so good a way [before.] He has a regular family, honest servants, and every thing is managed genteelly and with economy. He has intrusted all his English affairs to a mighty honest friendly man, Captain Vincent, who is cousin-german to the Marchioness. And as my lord has now taken so strong a turn to solitude and repose, as he formerly had to company and agitation, 'tis to be hoped that his good parts and excellent dispositions may at last, being accompanied with more health and tranquillity, render him a comfort to his friends, if not an orna-

[1] Charles Erskine of Tinwald, third son of Sir Charles Erskine of Alva, Bart., a Lord of Session, with the style of Lord Tinwald. His first wife was Grizel, daughter of John Grierson of Barjarg, by Catherine, eldest sister of Matthew Sharp of Hoddam. Lord Tinwald's third daughter Jane, married to William Kirkpatrick, second son of Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburne, Bart. was mother of Charles Kirkpatrick, to whom Matthew Sharp bequeathed his estate of Hoddam.

ment to his country. As you live in the neighbourhood of the Marchioness, it may give her a pleasure to hear these particulars. I am,[1] &c.

"*Weldehall, near St. Albans,*
"*April* 25, 1745."

On the other hand, we find Captain Vincent, when he speaks of Hume, saying, "I think it very happy that he is with my lord, and still more so if he is constantly to remain with him, which I do not foresee but that he may; and I must do him the justice to say, that after having had time enough to weigh the temper, situation, and circumstances of the person he has to deal with, he very candidly owned that it was what he could cheerfully abide with." And again in August, "Mr. Hume is almost wholly taken up with our friend personally, so that he can scarce have the resource of amusement, or even of business, which is somewhat hard upon a man of erudition and letters, whom indeed I think very deserving and good natured; and whilst he can be his companion, there could not be a better made choice of." The captain, in other letters, speaks of Hume as "a very worthy and knowing man," and as "My friend Mr. Hume;" and seems at one time to have wished that an annuity of £100 a-year should be settled upon him, without reference to his continuance in his office, and in addition to the salary he might receive while he did so. But the dawn was soon afterwards overcast.

Hume, in the first place, disliked some of Captain Vincent's proposed arrangements, as to the disposal

[1] Original in the possession of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq. This letter is printed in *The Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1809, p. 552.

of the person of the Marquis, and seems to have soon suspected him of wishing to carry through designs which would materially affect the interest of some of the Marquis's relations. It is probable that a feeling of friendliness, or of duty, may have prompted him to interfere. It may be so, and he may in reality have done good; but the impression produced by the correspondence is, regret that Hume did not at once retire in lofty scorn from the scene of these paltry cabals.

Captain Vincent held a commission from the Marquis to "hire and dismiss servants," and perform other like functions. It was in virtue of this authority that he dealt with Hume; and he seems at first to have thought, that in the person of the philosopher he had met with a sort of superior and valuable member of the fraternity of upper-servants. Though Hume had then written the works on which a large portion of his European reputation was afterwards built, this man seems to have regarded his literary abilities as merely an enhancement of the qualities which suited him for his servile office. Looking upon himself as a member of the family, he appears to have had much the same disposition to admit that Hume's literary distinction put them on a par with each other, as he might have had to admit that the display of an unexpected degree of musical talent in the servants' hall would qualify one of its frequenters to be hail-fellow well met with him in the dining-room. Whether Hume was right or wrong in the suspicions he entertained of Vincent, the conduct of Vincent to Hume was brutal, and that on his own showing.

One of Hume's views, as to the proper treatment of the Marquis, was, that the isolation of Weldhall was unsuitable to his condition: that he should be in a

a more cheerful residence, and one in other respects more suitable; and the dispute appears to have been for some time suspended on this peg. On the 31st October, Hume writes:—

"What is the mighty matter in dispute? Only about hiring a few carts to remove the family to another house, in order to quit this; which, for very good reasons, is infinitely disagreeable to your friend, very dangerous, will be uninhabitable for cold during the winter season, and costs £300 to £400 a-year, at least, to the family, more than is requisite." And afterwards he says of Vincent:—"He said, when he was here, that we shall live in this house till the lease was out, in spite of all opposition."

In the letter from which the preceding passage is taken, he says to Sir James Johnstone,—

"I must begin by complaining of you for having yoked me here with a man of the Captain's character, without giving me the least hint concerning it, if it was known to you, as, indeed, it is no secret to the world. You seemed satisfied with his conduct, and even praised him to me; which I am fully persuaded was the effect of your caution, not your conviction. However, I, who was altogether a stranger, entered into the family with so gross a prepossession. I found a man who took an infinite deal of pains for another, with the utmost professions both of disinterestedness and friendship to him and me; and I readily concluded that such a one must be either one of the best, or one of the worst of men. I can easily excuse myself for having judged at first on the favourable side; and must confess that, when light first began to break in upon me, I resisted it as I would a

temptation of the devil. I thought it, however, proper to keep my eyes open for farther observation; till the strangest and most palpable facts, which I shall inform you of at meeting, put the matter out of all doubt to me.

"There is nothing he would be fonder of than to sow dissension betwixt my Lady and you, whom he hates and fears. He flatters, and caresses, and praises, and hates me also; and would be glad to chase me away, as doing me the honour, and, I hope, the justice of thinking me a person very unfit for his purposes. As he wants all manner of pretext from my conduct and behaviour, he has broken his word."

That these statements are not those of a secret foe emitting calumnies in the dark, is made clear by the concluding terms of the letter, in which the writer, instead of asking his correspondent to keep its contents secret—a very common clause when people, thrown much in each other's way, write about each other's conduct to third parties—says, "I wish you would bring this letter south with you, that, if you will allow it, I may show it to him,"—that is, to Vincent.

The excitement communicated to Hume's nerves on this occasion, is shown by the following short letter to Sir James, so much at variance with the usual character of his writings:—

"God forgive you, dear Sir, God forgive you, for neither coming to us, nor writing to us. The unaccountable, and, I may say, the inhuman treatment we meet with here, throws your friend into rage and fury, and me into the greatest melancholy. My only comfort is when I think of your arrival; but still I know not when I can propose to myself that satisfaction. I flatter myself you have received two short

letters I wrote within this month; though the uncertainty of the post gives me apprehension. I must again entreat you to favour me with a short line, to let me know the time you can propose to be with us; for, if it be near, I shall wait with patience and with pleasure; if distant, I shall write you at length, that you and my Lady Marchioness may judge of our circumstances and situation.—I am, Dear Sir, yours, with great sincerity, D. H."

Unfortunately, the precise objects which the parties respectively desired to accomplish cannot be distinctly ascertained, as the letters generally refer to explanations which it will be necessary for the parties to make when they meet, because the troubled character of the times made private letters liable to be opened and inspected. Hume at the same time, being in the midst of a considerable retinue of servants under the control and management of his enemy, was in dread that spies were set on his motions. Thus he says to Sir James Johnstone, —

"I did write you the very first occasion after I came out thither. But I find my letters have great difficulty to reach you; for which reason I shall put this into the post-house myself, to prevent such practices as I suspect are used in this family. I have some reason also to think that spies are placed upon my most indifferent actions. I told you that I had had more conversation with one of the servants than was natural, and for what reason. Perhaps this fellow had the same privilege granted him as other spies, to rail against his employer, in order to draw in an unguarded man to be still more unguarded. But such practices, if real, (for I am not altogether certain,) can only turn to the confusion of those who use them.

Where there is no arbitrary power, innocence must be safe; and if there be arbitrary power in this family, 'tis long since I knew I could not remain in it. What a scene is this for a man nourished in philosophy and polite letters to enter into, all of a sudden, and unprepared! But I can laugh, whatever happens; and the newness of such practices rather diverts me. At first they caused indignation and hatred; and even (though I am ashamed to confess it) melancholy and sorrow."

What a scene indeed!

The chief incidental light that can be thrown on the nature of the suspicions which Hume entertained of Vincent, is derived from the position of the person to whom the greater part of these letters were addressed—Sir James Johnstone, who has already been alluded to as a connexion of the Annandale family. His brother, Colonel John Johnstone, had married the Marchioness-dowager, the mother of the Marquis, and by her had three children. She was an heiress; and though the Scottish estates, following an entail, were destined to pass to another family, her own property would be inherited by the children of her second marriage, on the death of the Marquis. The accumulated rents of his estates, being movable property, would also be the subject of succession, different from that of the entail; and therefore the management of this property, during his imbecility, was a matter of much moment to some of his connexions. The public had ample opportunity of knowing the extent of these accumulated funds. They rose to the sum of £415,000, and were the subject of long litigation both in England and Scotland. The "Annandale cases" had a material effect in settling in Britain the important principle which had been previously adopted over the greater part of Europe, that the movable or

personal estate of a deceased person must be distributed according to the law of the country where he had his domicile or permanent residence at the time of his death.

It is pretty evident that Vincent had certain family projects in view in connexion with the management of the estate, and that Hume wished to defeat them. Before the outbreak of the quarrel, the latter had written to Sir James:

"I shall endeavour to give you my opinion, which I am certain would be yours, were you to pass a day amongst us. I am sorry, therefore, to inform you, that nothing now remains but to take care of your friend's person, in the most decent and convenient manner; and, with regard to his fortune, to be attentive that the great superplus, which will remain after providing for these purposes, should be employed by my Lady and your nephews, as the true proprietors, for their honour and advantage."

Having written a civil letter to Vincent, stating that he desired the intervention of Sir James Johnstone, and that he believed, in the mean time, that the Marquis was satisfied with the engagement, and did not wish him to be dismissed, he thus hints to Sir James his suspicions of Vincent's views.

"I must own it was with excessive reluctance I wrote so softening and obliging a letter to this man; but as I knew that such a method of proceeding was conformable to your intentions, I thought it my duty to comply. However, I easily saw it would all be vain, and would only fortify him in his arrogance. Do you think that *the absolute possession of so ample a fortune*, to which this is the first requisite step, is a prize to be resigned for a few fair words or flattering

professions? He deals too much in that bait himself ever to be caught with it by others.

"I think this is the last opportunity that will ever offer of retrieving the family and yourself (as far as you are concerned with the family,) from falling into absolute slavery to so odious a master. If, in the beginning, and while he is watched by jealous eyes, he can attempt such things, what will he not do when he has fixed his authority, and has no longer any inspector over him?

"'Tis lucky, therefore, that this, as it seems the last, is so good an opportunity. Nothing was ever so barefaced as his conduct. To quarrel with me, merely because I civilly supported a most reasonable project; to threaten me with his vengeance, if I opened my lips to you concerning your friend's affairs; to execute that threat, without a pretext, or without consulting you; these steps give us such advantages over him as must not be neglected.

"I hope you will not take it amiss, if I say, that your conduct, with regard to your friend, and to those who have at different times been about him, has all along been too gentle and cautious. I had considerably shaken the authority of this man (though I had no authority myself,) merely by my firmness and resolution. He now assumes more, when he observes your precautions.

"But, as I do not believe that, though your firmness may daunt him, it will ever engage him to loose hold of so fine a prize, it will be requisite to think of more effectual remedies. Happily there is time enough both to contrive and to execute. For, though he makes me the offer of present payment, (which I hope you observed,) in order to engage me to leave you presently, he shall not get rid of me so easily."

Hume appears, with a marvellous degree of self-

restraint—marvellous in a man of independent spirit—to have felt that it was his duty not to be driven from his post by the insults of Vincent. He says to Sir James Johnstone, when apparently wearied out, "I fancy he must prevail at last; and I shall take care not to be a bone of contention betwixt you, unless you think I am the most advantageous piece of ground on which you can resist him." His opinion, that the interests of the other relations were concerned in his resisting Vincent's designs, is confirmed by the following letter, also addressed to Sir James Johnstone:—

"He [Vincent] desired you should intermeddle as little as possible in these affairs; adding, that he intended, by keeping my Lord's person and his English affairs in his own hands, to free my Lady from all slavery to you.

"Ever since, no entreaties, no threatenings have been spared to make me keep silence to you; to which my constant answer was, that I thought not that consistent with my duty. I told him freely, that I would lay all the foregoing reasons before you, when you came to London, and hoped you would prevail with him to alter his opinion. If not, we should all write, if you thought proper, to my Lady Marchioness, in order to have her determination. The endeavouring, then, to make me keep silence to you, was also to keep my Lady in the dark about such material points, since I could not have access to let her know the situation of our affairs, by any other means.

"He offered to let me leave your friend in the beginning of winter, if I pleased, provided I would make no opposition to his plan,—that is, would not inform you; for I was not capable of making any other opposition. He added, he would allow me my

salary for the whole year, and that he would himself supply my place, leave his house in London, and live with your friend. Can all this pains be taken, merely for the difference betwixt one house and another?

"An evening or two before his departure from Weldehall, he offered me the continuance of the same friendship, which had always subsisted betwixt us, if I would promise not to open my lips to you about this matter.

"The morning of his departure, he burst out all of a sudden, when the subject was not talked of, into threatenings, and told me, that, if I ever entered upon this subject with you, I should repent it. He went out of the house presently, and these were almost his last words."

The circumstance of these "threatenings" is amply confirmed by a letter of Vincent himself, addressed to the Marchioness; an admirable specimen of the outpouring of a vulgar and insolent mind:—

"I will venture to say I have the knack of parrying and managing him, but that Mr. Hume, who is so extraordinarily well paid, only for his company, and lodged and lives, that, if it was at his own expense, he could not do it for £200 a-year, should be gloomy and inconsolable for want of society, and show, for this good while past, little or no sign of content or gratitude to me for all I have done, and the best intentions to serve him, and principally promoted his being in this station, and repeatedly offered to come out frequently during the winter and stay two or three days at a time, whilst he should be in town. I shall do so, but nowise in consideration to him, but out of tenderness and regard to our friend. Mr. Hume is a scholar, and I believe an honest man; but one of his

best friends at Edinburgh at first wrote me, he had conversed more with books than the world, or any of the elegant part of it, chiefly owing to the narrowness of his fortune. He does not in this case seem to know his own interest, though I have long perceived it is what he mostly has a peculiar eye to. Hereafter I shall consider him no more than if I had never known him. Our friend in reality does not desire he should stay with him. I don't see his policy in offering to oppose my pleasure, and think it very wrong in him to mention his appealing to Sir James Johnstone. I dare say your ladyship thinks as I do, that it is unbecoming for me to be in a subservient state, in such a case, to any body. I am very zealously disposed to be accountable to you; both regard, civility, justice, long friendship and acquaintance, as well as near relationship, are all the motives in the world for it; and I hoped my being concerned would produce all possible good effects in your having constant, true, and satisfactory accounts, as well as that, in due time, those advantages in your own affairs might be accruing, which you are so justly entitled to, and which I have before declared to be one of the main ends to be accomplished, and which I believe you think I could effect better than another. It is not one of the most pleasing circumstances that, in the situation of our friend, it is an inlet to strangers, taken in by accident, to be too much acquainted with private family affairs. I certainly desire that Sir James and I should be in good correspondence, and I believe he is satisfied of that; but this man, taking it into his head to thwart my methods, and all to gratify his own desire of being near town in the winter forsooth, after the offer I have made of giving him relief sometimes,

and as nothing will satisfy some dispositions, I shall, at the end of the year, close all accounts, in which there will be done what was never done before, a complete state of the receipt and the expense, and then very willingly desire to be excused from having any farther concern. Most certainly I would do every thing in my power to serve and oblige you; but if you desire the continuance of my care, please to write to Sir James to signify occasionally to Mr. Hume that the management is left to me, and not to a stranger, who, if he is not satisfied, is at his liberty to remove from such attendance."

This illustration of character would be incomplete without a passage in a subsequent letter, in which, after Hume had ceased to attend on the Marquis, Vincent characterizes the sort of person who would be a desirable successor.

"If any proper person is about him again whilst I am concerned, terms for their behaviour must be specified, and as they wax fat and are encouraged, they must be discreet enough and reasonable in their nature, so as not to kick. Such deportment would engage any good offices of mine, in favour of a worthy man, fit for the purpose, which, I confess, is very hard to find, and possibly my Lord will not care to have any body put upon him by way of terms of continuance."

That the iron of this bondage entered into his soul, is apparent in many passages of Hume's letters. He regretted that he had left independence in a humble home, for dependence in a lordly mansion: he regretted that he had been led to meddle with intrigues, in which a vulgar selfish man, who knew

the world, was far more than a match for a profound philosopher. How wise it had been for him had he never deserted the humble prospects of an independent life, the following complaints, addressed to Lord Elibank, testify: —

"Meanwhile, I own to you, that my heart rebels against this unworthy treatment; and nothing but the prospect of depending entirely on you, and being independent of him, could make me submit to it. I have fifty resolutions about it. My loss, in ever hearkening to his treacherous professions, has been very great; but, as it is now irreparable, I must make the best of a bad bargain. I am proud to say that, as I am no plotter myself, I never suspect others to be such, till it be too late; and, having always lived independent, and in such a manner as that it never was any one's interest to profess false friendship to me, I am not sufficiently on my guard in this particular. . . . . My way of living is more melancholy than ever was submitted to by any human creature, who ever had any hopes or pretensions to any thing better; and if to confinement, solitude, and bad company, be also added these marks of disregard, ... I shall say nothing, but only that books, study, leisure, frugality, and independence, are a great deal better."

The filling up of the cup of his slights and injuries, and the termination of his servitude, is thus described by Hume; and one reads it with a feeling of relief, as an event long protracted, and for the occurrence of which the reader of the narrative is impatient. He says, writing to Sir James Johnstone, on 17th April, 1746,—

"You'll be surprised, perhaps, that I date my letters

no longer from Weldehall; this happened from an accident, if our inconstancies and uncertainties can be called such.

"You may remember in what humour you saw your friend a day or two before you left us. He became gay and good-humoured afterwards, but more moderately than usual. After that, he returned to his former disposition. These revolutions, we have observed, are like the hot and cold fits of an ague: and, like them too, in proportion as the one is gentle, the other is violent. But the misfortune is, that this prejudice continued even after he seemed, in other respects, entirely recovered. So that, having tried all ways to bring him to good humour, by talking with him, absenting myself for some days, &c., I have at last been obliged yesterday to leave him. He is determined, he says, to live altogether alone; and I fancy, indeed, it must come to that. As far as I can judge, this caprice came from nobody, and no cause, except physical ones. The wonder only is, that it was so long a-coming."

There is a stroke of generosity in his thus attributing the impulse to physical causes, and not only abstaining from an accusation of his enemy, but expressly exempting him from all blame. The readers of the correspondence have not probably all seconded the charitable exemption; and the exulting tones in which Vincent speaks of the dismissal, foster the suspicion that he had paved the way for it. He says, on the 19th April,—

"This day was a fortnight, my Lord told Mr. Hume to be gone, and that in terms which I shall not repeat; the Monday following, the same directions were renewed in a very peremptory manner, attended with such expressions of resentment, that I advised Hume to go

away the next day, which he did, the 8th; and on the 15th I went out thither, and had told my Lord before, that, if he could be reconciled to have him return, I was very willing to contribute towards it, which proposal was not in the least agreed to. . . . . Hume has not for many months stomached depending in any respect upon my decision, who was originally the cause of his being received at all, and had very great difficulty, long since and at different times, to get my Lord to bear him. He has mistaken the point; for there is nothing irritates his Lordship so much, as the thought of any one showing some tokens of authority, and looking on what he says as caprice, and of no consequence; and I really believe it is some such notion as this, which has produced so thorough an aversion."

There are two different views that may be taken of Hume's motives for not having at once resigned his appointment, at the very commencement of the train of indignities to which he was subjected. Whoever anticipates that a man who had tutored his mind by the rules of philosophy, and who lived an upright and independent life, may be actuated by some better views than those of mere pecuniary aggrandizement, will give him credit for having believed it to be his duty to watch over certain interests of the Annandale family at the sacrifice of his own feelings. Those who, strongly disapproving of his opinions as a philosopher, believe them to be therefore the dictate of a corrupted mind, will probably search for base and selfish motives; and will have little difficulty in identifying them with a pure love of gain, sufficiently strong to absorb all gentlemanly feeling and all spirit of independence. The favourable and charitable view admits of no direct demonstration on which an opponent could

not be able to throw doubt; and, the circumstances being stated, each reader is left to form his own opinion.

There is one thing that Hume never attempts to conceal—his feeling that the situation was in a pecuniary point of view advantageous to him, and his consequent desire to preserve it for his own sake, so long as he could do so with honour. That it should be so is one of those inconsistencies often exhibited in fine geniuses, which ordinary men of the world find it difficult to appreciate. It frequently proceeds from this circumstance, that, not being acquainted with the ordinary beaten tracks towards wealth and independence, which other men so easily find; yet desiring the latter, although perhaps they care not for the former endowment, they lay hold with avidity on any guide that is likely to lead them, by however devious and unpleasant a path, to the desired object. Men whose minds are much occupied with abstract subjects, if they be poor and desire to be free of unpleasant obligations, are thus apt to grasp at trifling rights with a pertinacity which has the air of selfishness. They feel a timidness of their own ability to make way in a bustling active world; and, conscious that it would be vain to compete with hard-headed acute men of business in the enlargement of their fortune, treat with an undue importance any comparatively trifling claims and advantages; while the sagacious world, which sees before it so many more advantageous paths to the objects of men's secondary ambition, ridicules their much ado about nothing. It was Hume's first and chief desire to be independent. That if he had enjoyed a choice of means, to be the hired companion of the Marquis of Annandale would have been among the last on which he would have fixed,

will easily be believed. But this occupation was the only method of gaining a livelihood that offered itself at the time; it was an honest one, and the disagreeable circumstances attending the means were overlooked in the desirableness of the end.

It is necessary, also, along with the account of Hume's efforts to gain a humble livelihood, to keep in mind the state of society in Scotland at that time. The union with England had introduced new habits of living, which made the means of the smaller aristocracy insufficient for the support of their younger children. On the other hand, England was jealous of Scottish rivalry in foreign trade: neither agriculture nor manufactures had made any considerable progress in Scotland; while Indian enterprise was in its infancy, and Scottish adventurers in the East had not yet found a Pactolus in the Ganges. At that period the gentleman-merchant, manufacturer, or money dealer; the civil engineer, architect, editor, or artist, were nearly unknown in Scotland. The only form in which a man poor and well born could retain the rank of a gentleman, if he did not follow one of the learned professions, was by obtaining a commission in the army, or a government civil appointment.[1]

Here ended the channels to subsistence along with

[1] So much had it been considered a legitimate object of the education of a young gentleman to bring him up to the expectation of a government office, that in the "Institute of the Law of Scotland," the posthumous work of John Erskine, who had been appointed professor of Scots law in the university of Edinburgh in 1737, it is mentioned as one of the duties of the guardian of a young man of good family with a small patrimony, to "advance a yearly sum, far beyond the interest of his patrimony, that he may appear suitably to his quality, while he is unprovided of any office under the government by which he can live decently." B. i. Tit. 7. § 25.

gentility, and he who had none of these paths open to him, and had resolved to make an independent livelihood by his own talents or labour, had at once, as the German nobles frequently do in the present day, to abandon his rank, and become a shopkeeper or small farmer, probably with the intention of returning to the bosom of his former social circle when he had realized an independence, but more commonly ending his days with the consciousness that he was, in the words of Henry Hunt, "the first of a race of gentlemen who had become a tradesman." Any lawyer who pays attention to the statistics of the Scottish decisions in mercantile cases, during the earlier part of the eighteenth century, will have noticed how frequently it occurs that the younger sons of some good family are mentioned as fulfilling the humblest duties of village tradesmen.[1] The practice is now comparatively unknown. The well edu-

[1] Walpole gives a curious illustration of the poverty of the Scottish nobility, before "the forty-five," saying of Lord Kilmarnock, "I don't know whether I told you that the man at the tennis court protests that he has known him dine with the man that sells pamphlets at Storey's gate, and says he would have often been glad if I would have taken him home to dinner. He was certainly so poor that in one of his wife's intercepted letters, she tells him she has plagued their steward for a fortnight for money, and can only get three shillings. Can any one help pitying such distress?" Walpole's Letters, ii. 144.

Goldsmith found the holder of a Scottish Peerage keeping a glove shop, and in the case of Lord Mordington, who had been arrested for debt, and claimed his privilege in the Common Pleas, "the bailiff made affidavit, that when he arrested the said lord, he was so mean in his apparel, as having a worn out suit of clothes and a dirty shirt on, and but sixpence in his pocket, he could not suppose him to be a peer of Great Britain, and of inadvertency arrested him." Fortescue's Reports, 165. This family was peculiarly celebrated, Lady Mordington having raised the question, whether a Scottish peeress who kept a tavern was protected by privilege of peerage from being amenable to the laws against keeping disorderly houses.

cated gentleman's son, if he be brought up to commerce, connects himself with those more liberal departments of it, in which he may reap the advantage of his education and training. To the practice which distinguished the period of depression above alluded to, aided perhaps by the spirit of clanship, we may owe the existence of so many aristocratic names among the humbler tradesmen in Scotland. In England the nomenclature of a city directory will as surely indicate the court and the tradesmen end of the town, as the Norman name used to indicate nobility and the Saxon vassalage. We do not find Edward Plantagenet keeping an oyster shop, or Henry Seymour cobbling shoes; but it would not be difficult to exemplify these humble occupations, in the regal names of a Robert Bruce or a James Stuart. In his essay on "The Parties of Great Britain," published in 1741, Hume alludes to the absence of a middle class in Scotland, where he says there are only "two ranks of men," "gentlemen who have some fortune and education, and the meanest starving poor: without any considerable number of the middling rank of men, which abounds more in England, both in cities and in the country, than in any other quarter of the world."[1]

The history of the miserable quarrels and intrigues

[1] He had an example connected with his own neighbourhood, if not with his own family, of the practice of the gentry following handicraft trades. George Hume, son of the minister of his native parish, Chirnside, who was connected with his own family, followed the humble occupation of a baker in the Canongate, and rose to the dignity of deacon of his trade. Ill-natured tradition says, that the philosopher disliked the vicinity to himself of this living illustration of the depression of the Scottish aristocracy, and occasionally put himself to some trouble to avoid meeting him on the street; but this tradition is not consistent with Hume's manly character.

connected with Hume's residence in the Annandale family, is a sad picture, not only of the position of the individual, but of his class, — the poor scholars, the servile drudges for bread. The modern literary labourer—or hack, as he is called by those who deem the word labourer too respectable to be employed on such an occasion — may look from the narrow bounds of his own independent home, with a feeling of sincere though not boastful superiority on David Hume, living in the splendid bondage of a peer's mansion. But in drawing the comparison on which the reflection rests, let him keep in view the state of literature and of society at that period, and ask where lay the hopes of the literary labourer? If he remained in the less conspicuous walks of learned industry, and became a divine or a teacher, there was before him the career of Parson Adams, taking his pot and pipe with the upper servants; or that of the threadbare tutor, subjected to the caprice and insolence of young men, who, if they do not happen to be endowed with a high tone of sentiment, must imbibe from all around them this feeling, that they are as far beyond the parallel of rank of their instructor, as the Brahmin is beyond that of the Pariah; or, thirdly, he might be the hired victim of a semi-maniac, whose few rays of remaining reason are but sufficient to indicate his own immeasurable superiority to the bought attendant of his humours. These were the resources of the man who distrusted the power of his own genius to soar into the higher flights of original literature; the man, who might perhaps be too conscientious, not to say also too timid, to throw the chance of his being able to meet his obligations to society and to perform his social duties, on the chance of his succeeding in the race for literary distinction.

But suppose the race run and gained, and the laurels on the victor's brow, — for what, then, has all been risked, all encountered? True, Hume himself became one of the distinguished few who gained both fame and fortune; but in the ordinary case, if the former were achieved, the latter did not follow; and in seeking the types of literary distinction in his age, Fielding, Goldsmith, and Johnson are the names that rise before us. Was the garden in which these flowers bloomed so genial that we would have others transplanted thither?

Let not, then, the considerate and charitable reader overlook all these palliations of the motives which may have induced a great man to humble himself and bear so much contumely. Let us suppose that he who reads this narrative is an editor of a newspaper, with a salary of say two or three hundred a-year; or that he writes articles for the periodicals, and neither in name nor in reality bound to any one, gets the fair price of his independent labour; or that he is a teacher in an active commercial academy, who, after the harassing labours of the day, can retire to the bosom of his own family, without fearing the frown or desiring the smile of any great man, — let him, if such should be his lot, indulge, in all its luxury, the consciousness of his superior independence and happier fate; but in looking from its elevation to David Hume, a bondman in the house of an insane lord, let compassion rather than contempt tinge his estimate of the illustrious victim's motives, and let him thank the better times, that with all the drudgery of his lot, its disappointed aspirations, and the bitterness of unavailing efforts to raise it to a higher and more justly-respected position in the eye of the world, have yet enabled him to quaff the sweet cup of independence.

Before entirely leaving the subject of Hume's connexion with the Marquis of Annandale, it is necessary to take a view of his conduct regarding a pecuniary dispute which arose out of the transaction. The terms of the agreement were very distinctly set forth by Captain Vincent in the following letter: —

"SIR,—You desire to have a letter from me, expressing all the conditions of the agreement concluded betwixt us, with regard to your living with the Marquis of Annandale. In compliance with so reasonable a request, I hereby acknowledge that, by virtue of powers committed to me by the said Marquis, and with the approbation and consent of his Lordship and Sir James Johnstone, I engaged that my Lord should pay you three hundred pounds sterling a-year, so long as you continued to live with him, beginning from the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and forty-five: also that the said Marquis, or his heirs, should be engaged to pay you, or your heirs, the sum of three hundred pounds, as one year's salary, even though the Marquis should happen to die any time in the first year of your attendance, or should embrace any new scheme or plan of life, which should make him choose that you should not continue to live out the first year with him. Another condition was, that, if you should, on your part, choose to leave the Marquis any time in the first or subsequent years, you should be free to do it; and that the Marquis should be bound to pay you your salary for the time you had attended him, and also the salary for that quarter in which you should leave him, in the same manner as if that quarter should be fully expired.

"These were the conditions of our agreement about the end of February last, on your first coming up to London for the purposes here mentioned, and which I

have committed to writing for your satisfaction and security, this first day of September, at Weldehall, four miles south of St. Alban's, in the county of Hertford, and in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-five."

Vincent, in continuation, and for Hume's information, gives him a copy of the agreement, under which one of his predecessors in office, by name Peter Young, had been engaged; an agreement, containing terms rather more favourable to the stipendiary than those of which Hume had consented to accept. And he concludes,—

"You see the latter part of Mr. Young's agreement are more advantageous terms than the latter part of yours; but I have done as much as I thought reasonable and proper for me, and as much as you desired. I make no doubt but, in any contingency, all the Marquis's friends and relations, would be far from reducing your conditions less than that of others in the same case, as, in my opinion, and I dare believe in theirs, your character and conduct would rather entitle you to a preference."

Hume had in the mean time received a present of £100 from the Marquis of Annandale, no reference to which is made in the agreement, and which he considered as a gratuity to induce him to leave Scotland, and enter on those negotiations with Lord Annandale and his friends, which ended in his being engaged, but might have ended otherwise; as an indemnity, in short, for the time wasted and the trouble taken in the preliminary arrangements. Indeed, it will have been noticed in his letter to Mr. Sharp, quoted above,[1] that this gratuity was sent by the Marquis along with the

[1] P. 179.

invitation to Hume to repair to London and hold a conference on the subject. Hume, then, was engaged at £300 a-year, with the condition that for any broken quarter a full quarter's salary should be paid. His engagement commenced on 1st April, 1745. It terminated on the 15th April, 1746. He thus considered himself entitled to £300 as a year's salary, and to £75 as the salary of the quarter, of which fifteen days had run. In the mean time, however, just after the expiry of the first year, it had occurred to the magnanimous Vincent, that though better terms than those given to Hume, had been obtained by the Peter Youngs and others, Hume's salary was twice as much as it should be, and ought to be reduced by a half. Hume, as if he had been subdued in spirit, by the life he had been leading—feeling as if his lot were cast, and his fate fixed—oblivious of the glorious dreams of ambition that had dawned on him ten years earlier in life and were yet to be realized, seems to have calmly contemplated this pecuniary reduction, and to have been inclined to agree to it if it should form the prelude to a permanent engagement. He thus wrote to the mother of the Marquis.

"I had the honour of a letter from my Lord Marquis last spring, inviting me to London, which I accordingly obeyed. He made me proposals of living with him; and Mr. Vincent, in concert with Sir James Johnstone, mentioned at first the yearly salary of £300 as an allowance which they thought reasonable; because my Lord had always paid so much to all the other gentlemen that attended him, even when his way of living, in other particulars, was much more expensive than at present. Since that, Mr. Vincent thinks this allowance too much, and proposes to reduce it from £300 to £150. My answer was, that what-

ever your Ladyship and my Lord should think my attendance merited, that I would very willingly accept of. As he still insisted on the reasonableness of his opinion, I have used the freedom to apply to your Ladyship, to whose sentiments every one, that has the honour of being connected with the family of Annandale, owe so entire a deference. I shall not insist on any circumstances in my own favour. Your Ladyship's penetration will easily be able to discover those, as well as what may be urged in favour of Mr. Vincent's opinion. And your determination shall be entirely submitted to by me."

At the same time he appears to have submitted his grievances to the consideration of his kind friend Henry Home, who, in a letter to Sir James Johnstone, expresses views which will probably meet with more sympathy than those announced by Hume himself.

"*Kames, 14th April*, 1746.

"SIR,—I have a letter from Mr. David Hume lately, which surprised me not a little, as if there were a plot formed against him to diminish his salary. For my part, I was never hearty in his present situation; as I did not consider the terms offered as any sufficient temptation for him to relinquish his studies, which, in all probability, would redound more to his advantage some time or other. For this reason, though I had a good deal of indignation at the dishonourable behaviour of the author of this motion, yet underhand I was not displeased with any occasion, not blameable on my friend's part, to disengage him. I thought instantly of writing him a letter not to stay upon any terms after such an affront; but, reflecting upon your interest in this matter, I found such an advice would

be inconsistent with the duty I owe you, and therefore stopped short till I should hear from you. I 'm well apprized of the great tenderness you have for your poor chief; and it is certainly of some consequence that he should have about him at least one person of integrity; and it should have given me pain to be the author of an advice that might affect you, though but indirectly. At the same time, I cannot think of sacrificing my friend, even upon your account, to make him submit to dishonourable terms; and, therefore, if you esteem his attendance of any use to the Marquis, I beg you 'll interpose that no more attempts of this kind be made. For I must be so free to declare that, should he himself yield to accept of lower terms, which I trust he will not be so mean-spirited to do, he shall never have my consent, and I know he will not act without it."

The Marchioness declined to interfere, and thus the award by which Hume agreed to abide was not made. He had thus began the first quarter of a new year under the old agreement, and he had not consented either to abandon the terms of that agreement for the time that was running, or even to make new terms applicable to any subsequent period, though he had shown a disposition to accept, under certain circumstances, of these new terms. His abrupt dismissal, however, put an end to the negotiation; and, as the terms of his agreement entitled him to the £75 if he had chosen to throw up his appointment, he thought he was not the less entitled to the money that he had been dismissed, and that the ignominious and insulting treatment connected with his dismissal should not be any inducement to him to abandon his claim. He could not lose sight, moreover, of the circumstance, that to place the parties more at their ease in dealing

with him, he had abandoned his claims on the professorship in Edinburgh. It is true that he had small chance of obtaining it, but that chance, such as it was, he was desired by the friends of the Marquis to abandon, and he did so. The question with him then was, how much injury he should allow to be added to the insults he had received. The £300, for his year's services, were paid. The payment of the £75, for the subsequent quarter, was resisted.

On the 9th June, 1746, Henry Home wrote a sensible and kind letter on the subject to Sir James Johnstone, in which he laid down the law of the case, that Hume's claim of salary for the broken quarter must be on the old agreement, and could not be "upon the footing of a proposal or offer, which never came the length of a covenant, and which, therefore, never had any effect;" and he says,—"The question then is, whether he is entitled to £75, for the broken quarter, or only to £37, 10s. The thing is a mere trifle to the Marquis of Annandale, but of some importance to a young gentleman who has not a large stock; and supposing the claim to be doubtful, I have great confidence in your generosity, that for a trifle you would not choose to leave a grudge in the young gentleman's mind, of a hardship done to him.

"But to deal with you after that plain manner which I know you love, I will speak out my mind to you, that in strict justice, and in the direct words of the agreement, Mr. Hume is entitled to £75."

Hume never entirely abandoned this claim. He was not in a position to urge it forward immediately after his dismissal, as another and more agreeable official appointment called him abroad. So late as 1760 and during the next ensuing year, we find him urging his

demand, and allusion is made to an action having been raised in the Court of Session. "The case," says Dr. Murray, "must have been settled extrajudicially or by reference; for, after a careful search in the minute book of the Court of Session, we do not find that it was ever enrolled."

There has been a general tendency to consider this pertinacious adherence to a pecuniary claim, as a proceeding unworthy of a philosopher. In any ordinary man, whether wise or foolish after the wisdom of the world, such conduct would have appeared but just and natural; but a philosopher is presumed to have no more respect for money and its value, than the generous and sympathizing gentleman on the stage, who on the impulse of the moment, always tosses a heavy purse to somebody, without having any more distinct notion of its contents than the admiring audience can have. Hume's notions of these matters were different. "Am I," he said, "in a condition to make the Marquis of Annandale a present of £75, that of right belongs to me." It is true that in the interval between the debt being incurred, and his insisting on its payment, he had by frugality and industry made himself independent. In 1747, he tells us that he was possessed of £1000, and in 1760, his fortune had probably considerably increased, though the sources of emolument which made him subsequently worth £1000 a-year, had not been then opened up. The surplus of the Marquis of Annandale's estate had in the mean time accumulated in the manner that has been already mentioned, and Hume probably thought it was an action more truly worthy of a philosopher, to make over his salary of librarian to the poor blind poet Blacklock, than to

abandon a claim of £75, justly due by an estate which had developed a surplus of £400,000.

Early in the year 1746, Hume received an invitation from General St. Clair, "to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France."[1] Before his departure, and while he expected to have to cross the Atlantic, he wrote the following letter, addressed to "Mr. Alexander Home, Advocate, His Majesty's Solicitor for Scotland, at Edinburgh." The concluding remarks evidently relate to the state prosecutions following on the insurrection in Scotland.

"*Portsmouth, May* 23, 1746.

"DEAR SOLICITOR,—A letter you have good reason to expect from me, before my departure for America; but a long one you cannot look for, if you consider that I knew not a word of this matter till Sunday last at night, that we shall begin to embark from hence in two or three days, and that I had very ingeniously stripped myself of every thing, by sending down my whole baggage for Scotland on Sunday morning. Such a romantic adventure, and such a hurry I have not heard of before. The office is very genteel — 10s. a day, perquisites, and no expenses. Remember me kindly to your brothers. Tell Frank I ask him ten thousand pardons. Let Mr. Dysart, and Mrs. Dysart know of my good wishes. Be assured yourself of my friendship. I cannot leave Europe without giving you one instance of it, and so much the greater that with regard to any other person

[1] My own Life.

but you, it would be a dangerous one. In short, I have been told, that the zeal of party has been apt sometimes to carry you too far in your expressions, and that fools are afraid of your violence in your new office. Seek the praise, my dear Sandy, of humanity and moderation. 'Tis the most durable, the most agreeable, and in the end the most profitable.

"I am, dear Sandy, yours most sincerely.

"For God's sake, think of *Willy Hamilton*."[1]

At the same time we find him writing to Henry Home, and speculating on the possibility of himself joining the military service.

"As to myself, my way of life is agreeable; and though it may not be so profitable as I am told, yet so large an army as will be under the general's command in America, must certainly render my perquisites very considerable. I have been asked, whether I would incline to enter into the service? My answer was, that at my years I could not decently accept of a lower commission than a company. The only prospect of working this point would be, to procure at first a company in an American regiment, by the choice of the colonies. But this I build not on, nor indeed am I very fond of it.[2] D. H."

The person to whom we thus find Hume acting in the capacity of secretary, was the Honourable James St. Clair, one of those commanders whose fortune it is to have passed through a long life of active military service, without having one opportunity of performing a distinguished action; for though, on the present occasion, the path to honour appeared to be at last opened to him, it was closed by the mismanagement of others. He was the second son of Henry Lord

[1] MS. R.S.E.

[2] Tytler's Life of Kames, i. 123.

St. Clair. His elder brother being engaged in the rebellion of 1715, was attainted by act of Parliament. The father left the family estates to General St. Clair, who, with a generous devotion to the hereditary principle, conveyed them to his elder brother, on that gentleman obtaining a pardon and a statutory removal of the disabilities of the attainder. He obtained the rank of colonel on 26th July, 1722, of major-general on 15th August, 1741, and of lieutenant-general on 4th June, 1745. During the last named year he was quarter-master general of the British forces in Flanders. He was for many years a member of Parliament, having been elected for the Dysart burghs in 1722, and subsequently for the counties of Sutherland and Fife. He died at Dysart on 30th November, 1762.[1]

The marine force connected with the proposed expedition was commanded by Amiral Richard Lestock, a man whose professional fate was in some respects of a like character with that of his military colleague. The intended object of the armament was an attack on the French possessions in Canada, and steps had been taken to second its efforts on the other side of the Atlantic, by bringing together a British American force. But the indolence or negligence of the authorities at home, delayed the departure of the fleet until it was too late to attempt such an enterprise; and then, as if to furnish a vivid illustration of weak and blundering counsels, that all these preparations might not be thrown away, the force prepared for operations in America was sent to attempt a descent on the coast of France.

The naval force, consisting of sixteen ships of the

[1] Douglas's Peerage, ii. 501–502.

line, eight frigates, and two bomb-ketches, accompanied by five thousand eight hundred land troops, including matrosses and bombardiers, set sail from Plymouth on 14th September.[1] Its destination was the town of Port L'Orient, then a flourishing port, as the depot of the French East India Company, which has since fallen to decay in common with the great establishment with which it was connected. The history and fate of the expedition will be best described in Hume's own words. It afforded no harvest of military glory to either country; and while it is but slightly described by our own historians, it is scarcely ever mentioned by those of France. National partiality will hardly make any lover of the true glory of his country regret that such an attempt was a failure. The method of conducting war by descents upon an enemy's coast, is a relic of barbarism which it is to be hoped the progress of humanity and civilisation will not permit either false enthusiasm or the auspices of a great name to revive among the nations of Europe. It is precisely the warlike tactic of the scalping knife — the wreaking against the weak that vengeance which cannot reach the strong. The rules of civilized war are to strike such blows as will annihilate the power of an enemy's government, with the least injury to the peaceful inhabitants of the country. Descents on a coast do much injury to individuals — they do little harm to the enemy's government. It is a system by which the vital parts are not attacked until they suffer by exhaustion from the injuries done to the extremities. Such expeditions do a grievous injury to our enemies, to accomplish a

[1] Campbell's Naval History, iv. 324. Appendix, A. It appears that Rodney commanded one of the ships, the Eagle.

very small good to ourselves. But if they cannot be avoided, the next step of mercy is to make them effectual by energetic and well-organized measures which render resistance hopeless, and subject the places attacked only to the modified license of a well-disciplined army. The blunders that made the present attempt as contemptible as it was cruel, are amply recorded by Hume, and may be a lesson of the responsibility incurred by those who fit out warlike expeditions.

In this expedition Hume not only acted as secretary to the general, but was appointed by him judge advocate of all the forces under his command, by a commission "given on board his majesty's ship Superb, the third day of August, 1746,"[1] in virtue of the power which the commander of an army possesses to fill up a vacancy in that office. The mixed ministerial and judicial duties of a judge advocate require a general knowledge of the great principles of law and justice, with a freedom from that technical thraldom of the practical lawyer which would be unsuitable to the rapidity of military operations; and there can be little doubt that these delicate and important functions were in this instance committed to one in every way capable of performing them in a satisfactory manner.

Some of Hume's permanent friendships appear to have been formed during this expedition. General Abercromby, with whom we will afterwards find him corresponding, was quarter-master general, Harry Erskine was deputy quarter-master, and Edmonstoune of Newton was a captain in the Royal Scottish regiment. Of the operations of the expedition, and some other

[1] MS. R.S.E.

incidents of deep interest connected with it, he sent the following narrative to his brother, John Hume, or Home, of Ninewells.

HUME *to his Brother.*

"Our first warlike attempt has been unsuccessful, though without any loss or dishonour. The public rumour must certainly have informed you that, being detained in the Channel, till it was too late to go to America, the ministry, who were willing to make some advantage of so considerable a sea and land armament, sent us to seek adventures on the coast of France. Though both the general and admiral were totally unacquainted with every part of the coast, without pilots, guides, or intelligence of any kind, and even without the common maps of the country; yet, being assured there were no regular troops near this whole coast, they hoped it was not possible but something might be successfully undertaken. They bent their course to Port L'Orient, a fine town on the coast of Britanny, the seat of the French East India trade, and which about twenty years ago was but a mean, contemptible village. The force of this town, the strength of its garrison, the nature of the coast and country, they professed themselves entirely ignorant of, except from such hearsay information as they had casually picked up at Plymouth. However, we made a happy voyage of three days, landed in the face of about 3000 armed militia on the 20th of September, marched up next day to the gates of L'Orient, and surveyed it.

"It lies at the bottom of a fine bay two leagues long, the mouth of which is commanded by the town and citadel of Port Louis, or Blavet, a place of great strength, and situated on a peninsula. The town of

L'Orient itself has no great strength, though surrounded by a new wall of about 30 foot high, fortified with half moons, and guarded with some cannon. They were in prodigious alarm at so unexpected an attack by numbers which their fears magnified, and immediately offered to capitulate, though upon terms which would have made their conquest of no significancy to us. They made some advances a few hours after, to abate of their demands; but the general positively refused to accept of the town on any other condition than that of surrendering at discretion. He had very good reason for this seeming rigour and haughtiness. It has long been the misfortune of English armies to be very ill-served in engineers; and surely there never was on any occasion such an assemblage of ignorant blockheads as those which at this time attended us. They positively affirmed it was easily in their power, by the assistance of a mortar and two twelve pounders, in ten hours' time, either to lay the town and East India magazine in ashes, or make a breach by which the forces might easily enter. This being laid before the general and admiral, they concluded themselves already masters of the town, and[1] needed grant no terms. They were besides afraid that had they taken the town upon terms, and redeemed it for a considerable sum of money, the good people of England, who love mischief, would not be satisfied, but would still entertain a suspicion that the success of his majesty's arms had been secretly sold by his commanders. Besides, nothing could be a greater blow to the French trade than the destruction of this town; nor what[2] could imprint a stronger terror of the English naval power, and more

[1] Sic in MS. [2] Ibid.

effectually reduce the French to a necessity of guarding their coast with regular forces, which must produce a great diversion from their ambitious projects on the frontiers. But when the engineers came to execution, it was found they could do nothing of what they had promised. Not one of their carkasses or red hot balls took effect. As the town could not be invested either by sea or land, they got a garrison of irregulars and regulars, which was above double our number, and played 35 pieces of cannon upon us while we could bring only four against them. Excessive rains fell, which brought sickness amongst our men that had been stowed in transports during the whole summer. We were ten miles from the fleet, the roads entirely spoilt, every thing was drawn by men, the whole horses in the country being driven away. So much fatigue and duty quite overcame our little army. The fleet anchored in a very unsafe place in Quimperlay Bay. For these and other reasons it was unanimously determined to raise the siege on the 27th of September; and to this measure there was not one contradictory opinion either in the fleet or army. We have not lost above ten men by the enemy in the whole expedition, and were not in the least molested either in our retreat or re-embarkation. We met with a violent storm on the 1st of October, while we were yet very near the coast, and have now got into Quiberon Bay south of Belle-Isle, where we wait for a reinforcement of three battalions from England. There are five or six of our transports amissing. After our French projects are over, which must be very soon because of the late season, we sail to Cork and Kingsale.

"While we lay at Plœmeur, a village about a league from L'Orient, there happened in our family one of

the most tragical stories ever I heard of, and than which nothing ever gave me more concern. I know not if ever you heard of Major Forbes, a brother of Sir Arthur's. He was, and was esteemed, a man of the greatest sense, honour, modesty, mildness, and equality of temper, in the world. His learning was very great for a man of any profession; but a prodigy for a soldier. His bravery had been tried, and was unquestioned. He had exhausted himself with fatigue and hunger for two days, so that he was obliged to leave the camp and come to our quarters, where I took the utmost care of him, as there was a great friendship betwixt us. He expressed vast anxiety that he should be obliged to leave his duty, and fear lest his honour should suffer by it. I endeavoured to quiet his mind as much as possible, and thought I had left him tolerably composed at night; but, returning to his room early next morning, I found him, with small remains of life, wallowing in his own blood, with the arteries of his arm cut asunder. I immediately sent for a surgeon, got a bandage tied to his arm, and recovered him entirely to his senses and understanding. He lived above four-and-twenty hours after, and I had several conversations with him. Never a man expressed a more steady contempt of life, nor more determined philosophical principles, suitable to his exit. He begged of me to unloosen his bandage, and hasten his death, as the last act of friendship I could show him: but, alas! we live not in Greek or Roman times. He told me that he knew he could not live a few days: but if he did, as soon as he became his own master, he would take a more expeditious method, which none of his friends could prevent. 'I die,' says he, 'from a jealousy of honour, perhaps too delicate; and do you think, if it were possible for me to live, I

would now consent to it, to be a gazing-stock to the foolish world. I am too far advanced to return. And if life was odious to me before, it must be doubly so at present.' He became delirious a few hours before he died. He had wrote a short letter to his brother, above ten hours before he cut his arteries. This we found on the table."

"*Quiberon Bay in Britanny, Oct.* 4, 1746."

"P.S.—The general has not sent off his despatches till to-day, so that I have an opportunity of saying a few words more. Our army disembarked on the 4th of October, and took possession of the peninsula of Quiberon, without opposition. We lay there, without molestation, for eight days, though the enemy had formed a powerful, at least a numerous, army of militia on the continent. The separation of so many of our transports, and the reinforcements not coming, determined us to reimbark, and return home, with some small hopes that our expedition has answered the chief part of its intended purpose, by making a diversion from the French army in Flanders. The French pretend to have gained a great victory; but with what truth we know not. The admiral landed some sailors, and took possession of the two islands of Houat and Hedie, which were secured by small forts. The governor of one of them, when he surrendered his fort, delivered up his purse to the sea officer, and begged him to take care of it, and secure it from the pillage of the sailors. The officer took charge of it, and, finding afterwards a proper opportunity to examine it, found it contained the important sum of ten sous, which is less than sixpence of our money."[1]

"*October* 17."

[1] MS. R.S.E.

As Niebuhr was an eye-witness of the battle of Copenhagen, so Hume also had thus an opportunity of observing some practical warlike operations, though they were on a much smaller scale, and were witnessed in much less exciting circumstances than those which attended the position of the citizen of Copenhagen. Thus, although not themselves soldiers, these two great historians swell the list, previously containing the names of Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Guicciardini, Davila, and Rapin, of those historians of warfare who have witnessed its practical operation. Voltaire, when the accuracy of his description of a battle was questioned by one who had been engaged in it, bid the soldier keep to his profession of fighting, and not interfere with another man's, which was that of writing; but there is little doubt, that the person who would accurately describe military manœuvres, will have his task facilitated by having actually witnessed some warlike operations, on however small a scale, and however unlike in character to those which he has to describe. Scott considered that he had derived much of his facility as a narrative historian from his services in the Mid-Lothian yeomanry; and Gibbon found that to be an active officer in the Hampshire militia was not without its use to the historian of the latter days of Rome.

It is pretty clear that Hume looked upon these operations, not only as events likely to furnish him with some critical knowledge of warlike affairs, but with the inquiring eye of one who might have an opportunity of afterwards narrating them in some historical work. In the appendix there will be found a pretty minute account by Hume, of the causes which led to the failure of the expedition, in a paper apparently drawn up as a vindication of the conduct

of General St. Clair. It does not appear to have been printed, although it seems to have been designed for the press. It contains the following passage: "A certain foreign writer, more anxious to tell his stories in an entertaining manner than to assure himself of their reality, has endeavoured to put this expedition in a ridiculous light; but as there is not one circumstance in his narration that has truth in it, or even the least appearance of truth, it would be needless to lose time in refuting it."

The following passage in a letter to Sir Harry Erskine, dated 20th January, 1756,[1] shows that he here alludes to Voltaire: "I have been set upon by several to write something, though it were only to be inserted in the Magazines, in opposition to this account which Voltaire has given of our expedition. But my answer still is, that it is not worth while, and that he is so totally mistaken in every circumstance of that affair, and indeed of every affair, that I presume nobody will pay attention to him. I hope you are of the same opinion." But if Voltaire ever wrote on this subject, it must have been in one of those works of which he took the liberty of determinedly denying the authorship, for there appears to be nothing bearing on the subject in the usual editions of his published and acknowledged works, and in his "Précis du Siecle de Louis XV.," he passes over the expedition with the briefest possible allusion.

We find Hume, on the return of the expedition, writing the following letter to Henry Home. It contains some curious notices of its writer's views and intentions, and betrays a sort of irresolution as to his subsequent projects, which seems to have haunted him through life. It is here that we find the first allusion

[1] In the possession of Cosmo Innes, Esq.

to his historical studies. The extracts from his notes, or adversaria, printed above, show that he had read much in history, but chiefly in that of the ancient nations. It does not appear that he had yet paid any marked attention to British history.

HUME *to* HENRY HOME.

"DEAR SIR,—I am ashamed of being so long in writing to you. If I should plead laziness, you would say I am much altered; if multiplicity of business, you would scarce believe me; if forgetfulness of you and our friendship, I should tell a gross untruth. I can therefore plead nothing but idleness, and a gay, pleasurable life, which steals away hour after hour, and day after day, and leaves no time for such occupations as one's sober reason may approve most of. This is our case while on shore, and even while on board, as far as one can have much enjoyment in that situation.

"I wrote my brother from the coast of Britanny; giving him some account of our expedition, and of the causes of our disappointment. I suppose he received it after you had left the country, but I doubt not he has informed you of it. We were very near a great success, the taking of L'Orient, perhaps Port Louis, which would have been a prodigious blow to France; and, having an open communication with the sea, might have made a great diversion of their forces, and done great service to the common cause. I suppose you are become a great general, by the misfortune of the seat of war being so long in your neighbourhood. I shall be able when we meet to give you the just cause of our failure. Our expedition to North America is now at an end; we are recalled to England, the convoy is arrived, and we re-embark in a few

days. I have an invitation to go over to Flanders with the general, and an offer of table, tent, horses, &c. I must own I have a great curiosity to see a real campaign, but I am deterred by the view of the expense, and am afraid, that living in a camp, without any character, and without any thing to do, would appear ridiculous. Had I any fortune which would give me a prospect of leisure and opportunity to prosecute my *historical projects*, nothing could be more useful to me, and I should pick up more literary knowledge in one campaign, by living in the general's family, and being introduced frequently to the duke's, than most officers could do after many years' service. But to what can all this serve? I am a philosopher, and so, I suppose, must continue.

"I am very uncertain of getting half pay, from several strange and unexpected accidents, which it would be too tedious to mention; and if I get it not, shall neither be gainer nor loser by the expedition. I believe, if I would have begun the world again, I might have returned an officer, gratis; and am certain, might have been made chaplain to a regiment gratis; but[1] . . . . . I need say no more. I shall stay a little time in London, to see if any thing new will present itself. If not, I shall return very cheerfully to books, leisure, and solitude, in the country. An elegant table has not spoiled my relish for sobriety; nor gaiety for study; and frequent disappointments have taught me that nothing need be despaired of, as well as that nothing can be depended on. You give yourself violent airs of wisdom; you will say, *Odi hominem ignavâ operâ, philosophicâ*

[1] Mr. Tytler says, "The blank is in the manuscript, the reader will be at no loss to supply it."

sententiâ. But you will not say so when you see me again with my Xenophon or Polybius in my hand; which, however, I shall willingly throw aside to be cheerful with you, as usual. My kind compliments to Mrs. Home, who, I am sorry to hear, has not yet got entirely the better of her illness. I am," &c.[1]

We find Hume corresponding also with Oswald and Colonel Abercromby, as to his claim of half-pay for his services as Judge Advocate in the expedition; and this subject we find him occasionally resuming down to so late a period as 1763, when he speaks of "insurmountable difficulties," and fears he must "despair of success."[2] It must be admitted that when he thought fit to make a pecuniary claim he did not easily resign it. His correspondent, Colonel Abercromby of Glassauch, has already been mentioned as having held a command in the expedition. He was afterwards one of Hume's intimate friends. Besides his rank in the army, he held the two discordant offices of king's painter in Scotland, and deputy-governor of Stirling castle. He was elected member of parliament for the shire of Banff in 1735,[3] and Hume's letters contain congratulations on his re-election in 1747, along with some incidents in his own journey towards Scotland.

"*Ninewells. 7th August*, 1747.

"DEAR COL.—I have many subjects to congratulate you upon. The honour you acquired at Sandberg, your safety, and your success in your elections. You are equally eminent in the arts of peace and war. The cabinet is no less a scene of glory to you than the field. You are a hero even in your sports and

[1] Tytler's Life of Kames, 125. [2] Memorials, &c. 76.
[3] Beatson, Parliamentary Register.

amusements; and discover a superior genius in whist, as well as in a state intrigue or in a battle.

"I hope you recover well of your wound, and I beg of you to inform me. I should be glad to know what became of Forster, and whether Bob Horne got the majority. I write to you upon the supposition of your being at London; because Dr. Clephane wrote me some time ago, that you was just setting out for it. If that be the case please make my most humble compliments to Mrs. Abercromby.

"If the Colonel be still detained abroad by any accident, I must beg it of you, Mrs. Abercromby, to take these compliments to yourself, and to keep this letter till the Colonel comes over, for it is not worth while to pay postage for it. I suppose, madam, that Lady Abercromby informed you of our happy voyage together, and safe arrival in Newcastle: your young cousin was a little noisy and obstreperous; our ship was dirty; our accommodation bad; our company sick. There were four spies, two informers, and three evidences, who sailed in the same ship with us. Yet notwithstanding all these circumstances, we were very well pleased with our voyage, chiefly on account of its shortness, which indeed is almost the only agreeable circumstance that can be in a voyage. I am, &c."

"To the royal in Bergen-op-zoom?[1] Have they lost any officers? I hope Guidelianus[2] is safe? I hope Fraser is converted?"

In his correspondence with Oswald on the same matter of his half-pay, his remarks on public affairs are very desponding. He says,—

[1] In allusion to the Royal Scottish Regiment—Bergen-op-zoom had been taken by storm on 16th Sept.

[2] This name—probably latinised from some joke known only to the parties, applies to Col. Edmonstoune of Newton.

"I know not whether I ought to congratulate you upon the success of your election,[1] where you prevailed so unexpectedly. I think the present times are so calamitous, and our future prospect so dismal, that it is a misfortune to have any concern in public affairs, which one cannot redress, and where it is difficult to arrive at a proper degree of insensibility or philosophy, as long as one is in the scene. You know my sentiments were always a little gloomy on that head; and I am sorry to observe, that all accidents (besides the natural course of events) turn out against us. What a surprising misfortune is this Bergen-op-zoom, which is almost unparalleled in modern history! I hear the Dutch troops, besides their common cowardice, and ill-discipline, are seized with an universal panic. This winter may perhaps decide the fate of Holland, and then where are we? I shall not be much disappointed if this prove the last parliament, worthy the name, we shall ever have in Britain. I cannot therefore congratulate you upon your having a seat in it: I can only congratulate you upon the universal joy and satisfaction it gave to every body."[2]

[1] For Fifeshire.

[2] Memorials, &c. p. 54.

CHAPTER VI.

1746—1748. ÆT. 35—37.

Hume returns to Ninewells — His domestic Position — His attempts in Poetry — Inquiry as to his Sentimentalism — Takes an interest in Politics — Appointed Secretary to General St. Clair on his mission to Turin — His journal of his Tour — Arrival in Holland — Rotterdam — The Hague — Breda — The War — French Soldiers — Nimeguen — Cologne — Bonn — The Rhine and its scenery — Coblentz — Wiesbaden — Frankfurt — Battle of Dettingen — Wurzburg — Ratisbon — Descent of the Danube — Observations on Germany — Vienna — The Emperor and Empress Queen — Styria — Carinthia — The Tyrol — Mantua — Cremona — Turin.

WE now find Hume restored, though but for a brief period, to the tranquil retirement of Ninewells; and undisturbed by public events, civil or warlike, sitting down quietly among his books in the midst of his family circle, consisting of his mother, his elder brother, and his sister. It would be interesting to obtain a glimpse of this circle and its habits; but the lapse of nearly a century has thrown it too far into the shade of time, to permit of these minute objects being distinguished. Perhaps the following scrap from the papers preserved by Hume himself,[1] may represent the evening diversions of Ninewells. It is written by another hand, but is touched and corrected here and there by Hume. Whether or not it is intended to have any reference to himself, is a matter on which I shall not attempt to forestall the reader's judgment.

[1] MS. R.S.E.

Character of ———, written by himself.

1. A very good man, the constant purpose of whose life is to do mischief.

2. Fancies he is disinterested, because he substitutes vanity in place of all other passions.

3. Very industrious, without serving either himself or others.

4. Licentious in his pen, cautious in his words, still more so in his actions.

5. Would have had no enemies, had he not courted them; seems desirous of being hated by the public, but has only attained the being railed at.

6. Has never been hurt by his enemies, because he never hated any one of them.

7. Exempt from vulgar prejudices—full of his own.

8. Very bashful, somewhat modest, no way humble.

9. A fool, capable of performances which few wise men can execute.

10. A wise man, guilty of indiscretions which the greatest simpletons can perceive.

11. Sociable, though he lives in solitude.

12.[1]

13. An enthusiast, without religion; a philosopher, who despairs to attain truth.

A moralist, who prefers instinct to reason.

A gallant, who gives no offence to husbands and mothers.

A scholar, without the ostentation of learning.

Sir Walter Scott says:—"We visited Corby castle on our return to Scotland, which remains, in point of situation, as beautiful as when its walks were celebrated by David Hume, in the only rhymes he was

[1] Obliterated.

ever known to be guilty of. Here they are from a pane of glass in an inn at Carlisle,—

> Here chicks in eggs for breakfast sprawl,
> Here godless boys God's glories squall,
> Here Scotchmen's heads do guard the wall,
> But Corby's walks atone for all."[1]

In the face, both of this assurance of the limited extent of Hume's poetical efforts, and of the circumstance that he was occasionally in the practice of copying such verses as pleased his ear,[2] or fancy, I venture to offer the following specimens of his versification, admitting the possibility but not the probability that some minute investigator might be able to identify them as the production of a less distinguished bard. The censorious critic will probably admit their genuineness, on the plea that no one but their author would commit such verses to writing. But apart from their internal evidence, there is every reason to presume that these efforts are by Hume. The first piece is dated in the writer's hand, as if to mark the day when it was composed. With the exception of

[1] Letter to Mr. Morritt, dated Abbotsford, 2d October, 1815. Lockhart's Life. The letter continues: "Would it not be a good quiz to advertise *The Poetical Works of David Hume*, with notes, critical, historical, and so forth, with a historical inquiry into the use of eggs for breakfast; a physical discussion on the causes of their being addled; a history of the English Church music, and of the choir of Carlisle in particular; a full account of the affair of 1745, with the trials, last speeches, and so forth, of the poor *plaids* who were strapped up at Carlisle; and lastly, a full and particular description of Corby, with the genealogy of every family who ever possessed it? I think, even without more than the usual waste of margin, the poems of David would make a decent twelve shilling touch."

[2] For instance, there is preserved in his handwriting a very neat transcript of the sweet and sad "Ode to Indifference," by Mrs. Greville, copied, probably at a time when something in its tone of

the third in order, they all contain, in corrections and otherwise, decided marks of being composed by the person in whose handwriting they are; and they are in the handwriting of David Hume.[1]

plaintive imagination was attuned to his own feelings, and called up in him a response to the complaint.

Nor ease nor peace that heart can know,
That, like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of joy or wo,
But turning trembles too.

And a desire to join in that prayer that the senses may be steeped in indifference, in which the poet says,

The tears which pity taught to flow,
My eyes shall then disown,
The heart, that throbb'd at others' wo,
Shall then scarce feel its own.

The wounds that now each moment bleed,
Each moment then shall close,
And tranquil days shall still succeed,
To nights of soft repose.

Oh fairy elf, but grant me this—
This one kind comfort send;
And so may never-fading bliss
Thy flowery paths attend.

So may the glow-worm's glimmering light
Thy fairy footsteps lead
To some new region of delight,
Unknown to mortal tread.

And be thy acorn goblet fill'd
With heaven's ambrosial dew;
Sweetest, freshest flowers distill'd,
That shed fresh sweets for you.

And what of life remains for me,
I'll pass in sober ease —
Half-pleased, contented will I be,
Content — but half to please.

[1] MSS. R.S.E. The third piece *appears* to be in Hume's hand; but it is written with so much schoolboy stiffness, that one cannot feel sure of its being so: perhaps it may be a production of very early life.

4th Nov. 1747.

Go, plaintive sounds, and to the fair
My secret wounds impart,
Tell all I hope, tell all I fear,
Each motion in my heart.

But she, methinks, is listening now
To some amusing strain,
The smile that triumphs o'er her brow,
Seems not to heed my pain.

Yet, plaintive sounds—yet, yet delay,
Howe'er my love repine,
Let this gay minute pass away,
The next, perhaps, is mine.

Yes, plaintive sounds, no longer crost,
Your griefs shall soon be o'er;
Her cheek, undimpled now, has lost
The smile it lately wore.

Yes, plaintive sounds, she now is yours,
'Tis now your turn to move:
Essay to soften all her powers,
And be that softness love.

Cease plaintive sounds, your task is done,
That serious tender air
Proves o'er her heart the conquest won,
I see you melting there.

Return, ye smiles,—return again,
Bring back each sprightly grace:
I yield up to your charming reign
That sweet enchanting face.

I take no outward shows amiss;
Rove where you will, her eyes:
Still let her smiles each shepherd bless,
So that she hear my sighs.

If this piece be deficient in fire or polish, it has at least the merit of simplicity, and of not being a slavish

adaptation to the formal taste of the age. The following pieces will scarcely perhaps be thought worthy of the like qualified praise.

Tell me, Clarinda, why this scorn,
Why hatred give for love?
Why for a gentler purpose born,
Wouldst thou a tyrant prove?

Why draw a cloud upon that face,
Made to enslave mankind?
Why through your lips does thunder pass,
Those lips for love design'd.

Kindness, conjoin'd with meaner charms,
Will from you conquests gain;
We fly into *extended* arms,
In *close-embraced* remain.

Thus when the angry heavens transform
To frowns their cheerful smiles,
When the dread thunder's voice a storm
To trembling swains foretells,

If but a humble cottage nigh
Presents its peaceful shade,
We scorn the furies of the sky,
And court its friendly aid.

TO A LADY,

Suspecting that the friendship of men to her sex always concealed a more dangerous passion.

Hang, my lyre, upon the willow,
Sigh to winds thy notes forlorn,
Or along the foaming billow,
Float the wrecking tempest's scorn.

Airs no more thy warbling raises,
Such as Laura deigns approve;
Laura scorns her poet's praises,
Artless friendship calls it love.

Impious love, that, spurning duty,
Spurning nature's chastest ties,
Mocks thy tears, dejected beauty,
Sports with fallen virtue's sighs.

Call it love no more, profaning
Truth with dark suspicion's wound;
Or, if still the term retaining,
Change the sense, preserve the sound.

Yes, 'tis love, that name is given,
Angels, to your purest flames;
Such a love as merits Heaven,
Heaven's divinest image claims.

LAURA'S ANSWER.

Soon be thy lyre to winds consign'd,
Or hurl'd beneath the raging deep;
For while such strains seduce my mind,
How shall my heart its purpose keep.

Thy artless lays, which artless seem,
With too much fondness I approve;
Oh write no more in such a theme,
Or Laura's friendship ends in love.

The question, whether the man concerning whom a biographical work is written was ever in love, is an important feature in his history, if any light can be thrown upon it. Perhaps some readers will hold, that the tameness of these verses show that, at all events, when he wrote *them*, Hume was under the impulse of no passion. Very little more light can be brought to bear on this subject; and what can be obtained, is of a like faint and negative cast. He tells us in his "own life," "As I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them." In his essays he frequently discusses the passion of love,

dividing it into its elements about as systematically as if he had subjected it to a chemical analysis, and laying down rules regarding it as distinctly and specifically as if it were a system of logic. Nor do the references in his correspondence to any individuals of the other sex, show any perceptible warmth of sentiment. In a letter to Henry Home, of which the other portions are printed above,[1] he speaks with perhaps as much appearance of sentiment as any where else, when he says,—

"I thank Mrs. Home for her intelligence, and have much employed my brain to find out the person she means. It could not be the widow: for she toasts always the Duke of Argyle or Lord Stair, and never would name a young man whom she may reasonably enough suppose to be in love with her. I shall therefore flatter myself it was Miss Dalrymple. It is now Exchequer term: she is among the few *very fine ladies* of Mrs. Home's acquaintance, whom I have the happiness of knowing. In short, many circumstances, besides my earnest wishes, concur to make me believe it was she who did me that honour. I will persevere in that opinion; unless you think it proper to disabuse me, for fear of my being too much puft up with vanity by such a conceit."

His friend Jardine, writing to him when he was secretary of legation in France, says, evidently in ironical reference to his notorious want of sensibility in this respect, "An inordinate love of the fair sex, as I have often told you, is one of those sins, that always, even from your earliest years, did most easily beset you."

Nor does the following passage in a letter from

[1] See p. 144.

Mr. Crawford,[1] dated, London, 9th December, 1766, seem to convey any more serious charge: —

"What keeps you in Scotland? Lord Ossory says, it can be nothing but the young beauty for whom you had formerly some passion. But we are both of opinion, that she must now be old and ugly, and cannot be worthy to detain you in so vile a country. Neither love nor wit can flourish there, otherwise you would not have cracked such bad jokes upon philosophers, the best subject in the world for joking upon. Then,

—fuge nate Deâ — *sterili teque abstrahe terrâ.*

Come up here, and I know not but what I may be able to introduce you to a young beauty, such as your imagination never figured to itself. With charms and accomplishments possessed by no other woman, she has an understanding equal to that of Madame du Deffand. — Would to God she were blind like her too, that I might dare to avow my passion for her."

If there be any thing in these passages tending to show a slight degree of interest in the sex, their tendency will perhaps be fully neutralized by Hume's exultation on the fortunate nature of his own happy indifference, in a letter to Oswald, which will be found a few pages farther on. It must be confessed, indeed, that, according to all appearance, the appellation, more expressive than classical, frequently used on such occasions, is applicable to Hume, and that he was a "sad indifferent dog."

To return to the verses.—The following is a specimen of a totally different cast; and, if less ambitious in its pretensions, it will probably be thought to have

[1] MS. R.S.E. Probably James Crawford of Auchinames.

more successfully accomplished what it aims at. It is called "An Epistle to Mr. John Medina," a son of Sir John Medina, the celebrated painter, to whom, probably from the habits hinted at in the verses, he was a far inferior artist. He is believed to have been the painter of a large portion of the very numerous extant portraits of Queen Mary. It would be difficult at this day to discover the individual whom he is here called upon to portray, with attributes about as grotesque as those of his inexplicable countryman, Aiken Drum. As several names of persons who were active supporters of the measures of social economy, and the agricultural improvements alluded to in the verses, might be adduced, but no one can be named to whom they appear distinctly and exclusively to apply, it may be less invidious to present them in the form of a purely imaginative picture, than to associate them with any name.

AN EPISTLE TO MR. JOHN MEDINA.

Now, dear Medina, honest John,
Since all your former friends are gone,
And even Macgibbon 's turn'd a saint,[1]
You now perhaps have time to paint.
For you, and for your pencil fit,
The subject shall be full of wit.

Draw me a little lively knight,
And place the figure full in sight.
With mien erect, and sprightly air,
To win the great, and catch the fair.
Make him a wreath of turnip tops,
With madder interwove, and hops;
Lucerne, and St. Foin, here and there,
Amid the foliage must appear;
Then add potatoes, white and red,
A garland for our hero's head.

[1] Macgibbon was the name of a dissipated musical composer.

His coat be of election laws,
Lined with the patriot's good old cause.
His waistcoat of the linen bill,
Lapelled with flint and lined with tull.
The turnpike act must serve for breeches;
With hose of rape tied up with fetches,
Furrows, new horse-hoed, hide his shoes,
As earnest cross the fields he goes.

Draw Pallas offering him a spool,
The Lemnian god a miner's tool.
Ceres three stalks of blighted corn,
Dangling from an inverted horn;
And Plutus every scheme inspiring
With proffer'd gold, but still retiring:
Alike to each important call,
Attentive, let him grasp at all.

Finish, my friend, this grand design,
And immortality be thine.
No more obliged, for twenty groats,
To draw the Duke, or Queen of Scots,
Your name shall rise, prophetic fame says,
Above your Mercis[1] or your Ramsays.
Even I, in literary story,
Perhaps shall have my share of glory.

Hume was again called away from the studious retirement of Ninewells, by being appointed secretary to the mission of his friend General St. Clair, to the court of Turin. The real object of the mission, in whatever aspect it might have been openly represented, certainly was to satisfy the British court on the question, whether Sardinia, and perhaps some of the other stipendiary states, had furnished their respective quotas of men to the war. The following letter by Hume to his friend Oswald, details many of his feelings on assuming this new duty. It will be found to be as different in tone from his previous letters, as the life he was entering on was different from his hermit

[1] Probably Philip Mercier, portrait painter, who died 1760.

retirement at Ninewells, or his slavery at Weldhall. This letter, indeed, appears to mark an epoch in his correspondence. It is the first in which he mentions miscellaneous public events, with the feeling of one who takes an interest in the living politics of his time; and shows that the brief episode of active practical life, in which he had just borne a share, and the prospect of a renewal of such scenes, had opened his mind to the reception of external impressions.

HUME *to* JAMES OSWALD.

"I have little more to say to you than to bid you adieu before I leave this country. I got an invitation from General St. Clair, to attend him in his new employment at the court of Turin, which I hope will prove an agreeable, if not a profitable jaunt for me. I shall have an opportunity of seeing courts and camps; and if I can afterwards be so happy as to attain leisure and other opportunities, this knowledge may even turn to account to me, as a man of letters, which, I confess, has always been the sole object of my ambition. I have long had an intention, in my riper years, of composing some history; and I question not but some greater experience in the operations of the field, and the intrigues of the cabinet, will be requisite, in order to enable me to speak with judgment upon these subjects. But, notwithstanding of these flattering ideas of futurity, as well as the present charms of variety, I must confess that I left home with infinite regret, where I had treasured up stores of study and plans of thinking for many years. I am sure I shall not be so happy as I should have been had I prosecuted these. But, in certain situations, a man dares not follow his own judgment or refuse such offers as these.

"The subscriptions for the stocks were filled up with wonderful quickness this year; but, as the ministry had made no private bargains with stock-jobbers, but opened books for every body, these money-dealers have clogged the wheels a little, and the subscribers find themselves losers on the disposal of their stock, to their great surprise.

"There was a controverted election, that has made some noise, betwixt John Pitt and Mr. Drax of the Prince's family, when Mr. Pelham, finding himself under a necessity of disobliging the heir-apparent, resolved to have others as deep in the scrape as himself; and accordingly obliged Fox, Pitt, Lyttelton, and Hume Campbell, all to speak on the same side. They say their speeches were very diverting. An ass could not mumble a thistle more ridiculously than they handled this subject. Particularly our countryman, not being prepared, was not able to speak a word to the subject, but spent half an hour in protestations of his own integrity, disinterestedness, and regard to every man's right and property.

"His brother, Lord Marchmont, has had the most extraordinary adventure in the world. About three weeks ago he was at the play, where he espied in one of the boxes a fair virgin, whose looks, air, and manner, made such a powerful and wonderful effect upon him as was visible to every bystander. His raptures were so undisguised, his looks so expressive of passion, his inquiries so earnest, that every body took notice of it. He soon was told that her name was Crompton, a linen-draper's daughter, that had been bankrupt last year, and had not been able to pay above five shillings in the pound. The fair nymph herself was about sixteen or seventeen, and being supported by some relations, appeared in every

public place, and had fatigued every eye but that of his Lordship, which, being entirely employed in the severer studies, had never till that fatal moment opened upon her charms. Such and so powerful was their effect, as to be able to justify all the Pharamonds and Cyruses in their utmost extravagancies. He wrote next morning to her father, desiring leave to visit his daughter on honourable terms; and in a few days she will be Countess of Marchmont.[1] All this is certainly true. They say many small fevers prevent a great one. Heaven be praised that I have always liked the persons and company of the fair sex! for by that means I hope to escape such ridiculous passions. But could you ever suspect the ambitious, the severe, the bustling, the impetuous, the violent Marchmont, of becoming so tender and gentle a swain—an Artamenes, an Oroondates?

"The officers, (I suppose from effeminacy,) are generally much disgusted at the service. They speak of no less than three hundred, high and low, who have desired leave to sell out. I am," &c.[2]

"*London, January* 29, 1748."

On the same occasion he writes the following short letter to Henry Home.

"*London, Feb.* 9. 1748.

"DEAR SIR,—The doubt and ambiguity with which I came hither was soon removed. General St. Clair positively refused to accept of a secretary from the

[1] The marriage took place accordingly on the day following the date of the letter, viz. 30th January. She was the second wife of Lord Marchmont; his first countess, whose name was Western, having died on 9th May of the previous year.

[2] Memorials of the Right Hon. James Oswald, p. 59.

ministry; and I go along with him in the same station as before. Every body congratulates me upon the pleasure I am to reap from this jaunt: and really I have little to oppose to this prepossession, except an inward reluctance to leave my books, and leisure and retreat. However, I am glad to find this passion still so fresh and entire; and am sure, by its means, to pass my latter days happily and cheerfully, whatever fortune may attend me.

"I leave here two works going on: a new edition of my Essays, all of which you have seen, except one, 'Of the Protestant Succession,' where I treat that subject as coolly and indifferently as I would the dispute between Cæsar and Pompey. The conclusion shows me a Whig, but a very sceptical one. Some people would frighten me with the consequences that may attend this candour, considering my present station; but I own I cannot apprehend any thing.

"The other work is the 'Philosophical Essays,' which you dissuaded me from printing. I won't justify the prudence of this step, any other way than by expressing my indifference about all the consequences that may follow. I will expect to hear from you; as you may from me. Remember me to Mrs. Home, and believe me to be yours most sincerely.

"P.S.—We set out on Friday next for Harwich."[1]

Of his second appointment under General St. Clair, on the duties of which he entered at the beginning of the year 1748, Hume thus speaks in his "own life," after having mentioned the descent on the coast of France,—

"Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation

[1] Tytler's Life of Kames, i. 128.

from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aid-de-camp to the General, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life. I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so: in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds."

We fortunately possess a more detailed account of his adventures and observations on this occasion, in a pretty minute journal which he transmitted to his brother, for the amusement of his family at home.[1] It requires no farther introduction, and is as follows:—

"*Hague, 3d March*, 1748, *N. S.*

"DEAR BROTHER,—I have taken a fancy, for your amusement, to write a sort of journal of our travels, and to send you the whole from Turin, by a messenger whom we are to despatch from thence. I shall endeavour to find little snatches of leisure in the several towns through which we shall pass, and shall give you an account of the appearances of things, more than of our own adventures. The former may be some entertainment, but the other will in all probability contain little diversity, at least for some time.

"We set out from Harwich the day I wrote you

[1] MS. R.S.E.

last, and in twenty-four hours arrived at Helvoet-Sluys. I had the misfortune to be excessively sick, but the consolation to see an admiral as sick as myself. 'Twas Admiral Forbes, the most agreeable, sensible sea officer in England. Harwich and Helvoet are the general images in abridgment of all the towns in the two countries; both of them small sea-port towns, without much trade, or any support but passengers; yet the industry, economy, and cleanliness of the Dutch, have made the latter the much prettier town. The day of our arrival we lay at Rotterdam, and passed through the Brill and Maeslan-Sluys. Yesterday we lay at this place. Holland has the beauties of novelty to a stranger, as being so much different from all the other parts of the world; but not those of diversity, for every part of it is like another. 'Tis an unbounded plain, divided by canals, and ditches, and rivers. The sea higher than the country, the towns higher than the sea, and the ramparts higher than the towns. The country is in general pretty open, except a few willow trees, and the avenues of elm, which lead to their towns, and shade the ramparts. But the country is at present covered with snow, so that it is difficult to judge of it. Were the season favourable, the way of travelling would be very pleasant, being along the dykes, which gives you a perfect prospect of the whole country. I need not describe the beauty and elegance of the Dutch towns, particularly of the Hague, which nothing can exceed. Rotterdam is also a handsome town. The mixture of houses, trees, and ships, has a fine effect, and unites town, country, and sea, in one prospect. Every person and every house has the appearance of plenty and sobriety, of industry and ease. I own, however, that the outside of their houses are the best; they are

too slight, full of bad windows, and not very well contrived."

"*Hague*, 10*th March*.

"The General intended to have left this place to-day, but was detained by the arrival of his Royal Highness,[1] which will retard him a day or two longer. We go first to Breda, where the General's two battalions lie, out of which he will endeavour to form one good healthy battalion to remain here. The other returns to Scotland. We go in a day or two. The Prince of Orange's authority seems firmly established, and for the present is as absolute as that of any king in Europe; the favour of the people is the foundation of it.[2] He is certainly a man of great humanity and moderation, but his courage and capacity is perhaps a little more doubtful. The present emergencies have given him an opportunity of establishing his authority on a firmer bottom than popular favour; viz. on foreign and mercenary forces. The Dutch troops have behaved so ill, that the people themselves are willing to see them disgraced, and discredited, and broke; so that the prince has been able to make great distinctions in favour of foreigners, with the good will of the people, who see the necessity of it.

"He has broke all the Dutch troops that were prisoners in France, but keeps up the foreigners that were in the same condition; and the latter are chiefly encouraged in every thing. Great and universal joy appeared on the birth of the young prince while we were there, though all the arrangements were taken

[1] The Duke of Cumberland.

[2] The revolution by which the Stadtholdership was re-established in the Prince of Orange, had taken place during the previous year.

to have the young princess succeed, and particularly, she was named colonel of a regiment of guards.

"This is a place of little or no amusement, nor has the court made much difference in this respect. No balls, no comedy, no opera. The prince gives great application to business, which, however, they pretend does not advance very much. But this we may venture to say, that Holland was undoubtedly ruined by its liberty, and has now a chance of being saved by its prince. Let republicans make the best of this example they can.

"'Tis here regarded as a point indisputable, that the old governors were in concert with the French, and were resolved, by delivering up town after town, and army after army, to have peace, though at the price of slavery and dependence. 'Tis a pity that the scrupulous and conscientious character of the prince has not allowed him to make some examples of these rascals, against whom, 'tis said, there could have been legal proofs. It was not the mob, properly speaking, that made the revolution, but the middling and substantial tradesmen. At Rotterdam particularly, these sent a regular deputation to the magistrates, requiring the establishment of the Prince of Orange, telling them, at the same time, that if their request was refused, they could no longer answer for the mob. This hint was sufficiently understood, and gave an example to all the other towns in the province.

"The only violence offered, was that of throwing into the canals whoever wore not Orange ribbons. Every yellow rag, woollen, silk, and linen, were employed; and when these were exhausted, the flowers were made use of; and happily the revolution began in the spring, when the primroses and daffodillys could serve as Orange cockades. To this day, every

boor, and tradesman, and schoolboy, wears the ensigns of the prince; and every street in every village, as well as in every town, has triumphal arches with emblematical figures and Latin inscriptions, such as, 'Tandem justitia triumphat,' 'Novus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo,' 'Vox populi, vox Dei.' I shall only say, if this last motto be true, the Prince of Orange is the only *Jure divino* monarch in the universe. I believe, since the time of Germanicus, deservedly the darling of the Romans, never was a people so fond of one man; surely there entered not the smallest intrigue of his own into his election. There is something of innocence and simplicity in his character, which promotes more his popularity than the greatest capacity. But,

> Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
> Tempus eget.

"*Breda*, 16*th March*.

"We arrived here the day before yesterday, in three days from the Hague, and as the snows were then melted, after the most violent frost in the world, we discovered Holland in all its native deformity. Nothing can be more disagreeable than that heap of dirt, and mud, and ditches, and reeds, which they here call a country, except the silly collection of shells and clipped evergreens which they call a garden. It gave us a sensible pleasure, as we came near Breda, to find ourselves on a dry barren heath, and to see something like a human habitation. I have heard that a man, from the aspect of Holland, would imagine that land and water, after many struggles which should be master of it, had at last agreed to share it betwixt them. If so, the land has come by much the worst bargain, and has much the smallest share of the possession. I am told, however, that Holland is a plea-

sant enough habitation in the summer: though even that beauty lasts a very short time; for, during the latter end of summer and during the harvest, the canals send forth so disagreeable and unwholesome a smell, that there is no enduring of it.

"We passed over the Maese at Gorcum, where it is above half a mile broad; and as the ice had been softened by a thaw of three or four days, we were obliged to make use of an ice boat. The operation is after this manner: you place yourself on your ice boat, which is like an ordinary boat, except only that it runs upon two keels, shod with iron. Three or four men push you along in this boat, very cleverly, as long as the ice will bear you: but whenever that fails, plump down you go into the water of a sudden. You are very heartily frightened. The men are wet, up to the neck sometimes; but, keeping hold of the boat, leap in, row you through the water, till they come to ice which can bear. There they pull you up, run along with you, till you sink again; and so they renew the same operation.

"At Gorcum we met with Drumlanrig's regiment, which does no great honour to their country by their looks and appearances. There has been a mutiny amongst them, out of discontent to the country. We met with some Highlanders, who regretted extremely their native hills.

"The night we came to Breda we supped with Lord Albemarle, who told us, in entering, that we might soon expect to hear of a battle in the neighbourhood; and accordingly, in about an hour, a messenger came in with the news, which is the best we have had in the Low Countries during the whole war. You have no doubt heard of it. It was the attack of a convoy to Bergen-op-Zoom, escorted

by about 5000 French, where 400 were killed, and about 1000 taken prisoners.[1] Next day, the prisoners were led through the town. They were the piquets of several old regiments, and some companies of grenadiers; but such pitiful-looking fellows never man set eye on. France is surely much exhausted of men, when she can fill her armies with such poor wretches. We all said, when they passed along, are these the people that have beat us so often?

"I stood behind Lord Albemarle, who was looking over a low window to see them. One of the ragged scarecrows, seeing his lordship's star and ribbon, turned about to him, and said very briskly, 'Aujourd'hui pour vous, Monsieur, demain pour le roi.' If they have all this spirit, no wonder they beat us. However, when one compares to the French the figures of men that are in this town, British, Hessians, and Austrians, they seem almost of a different species. Their officers expect they will all do much better after having had leisure to see their enemy. Breda is a strong town, though not near so strong as Bergen-op-zoom. It is almost surrounded by water, and inaccessible except in one place, by which it will be taken, if the 206,000 men, whom we are to have in the field this year, in the Low Countries, cannot save it. 'Tis certain so many men are stipulated by the several powers, — the greatest army that ever was assembled together in the world, since the Xerxeses and Artaxerxeses; if these could be called armies. God prosper his royal highness, and give him what he only wants; I mean good fortune, to second his prudence and conduct.

"The French certainly have laid their account to

[1] The French, under Lowendahl, had taken Bergen by storm on the 5th September, 1747.

give up Flanders by the peace; they squeeze, and oppress, and tax and abuse the Flemings so much, that 'tis evident they consider them not as subjects. They are also said to be pretty heartily tired of the war, notwithstanding of their great successes. I suppose the loss of their trade pinches them; so that there are some hopes of a peace, which may not be altogether intolerable. By the conversation I have had with several judicious officers, I find that Mareschal Saxe and Lowendahl, though sensible men and of great experience, are not regarded as such mighty generals as we are apt to imagine them at a distance, from their victories and conquests. Their blunders last campaign were many and obvious, and particularly that of besieging Bergen-op-zoom. 'Twas a thousand to one they got it, and it serves them to no purpose when they have it: It is not by that quarter they can penetrate into the Provinces."

"*Nimeguen, 20th March.*

"We have come from Breda in two days, and lay last night at Bois-le-duc, which is situated in the midst of a lake, and is absolutely impregnable. That part of Brabant, through which we travelled, is not very fertile, and is full of sandy heaths. Nimeguen is in the Gueldre, the pleasantest province of the seven, perhaps of the seventeen. The land is beautifully divided into heights and plains, and is cut by the branches of the Rhine. Nimeguen has a very commanding prospect, and the country below it is particularly remarkable at present because of the innundation of the Wahal, a branch of the Rhine, which covers the whole fields for several leagues; and you see nothing but the tops of trees standing up amidst the waters, which recalls the idea of Egypt during the

inundations of the Nile. Nimeguen is a well-built town, not very strong, though surrounded with a great many works. Here we met our machines, which came hither by a shorter road from the Hague. They are a berline for the general and his company, and a chaise for the servants. We set out to-morrow, and pass by Cologne, Frankfort, and Ratisbon, till we meet with the Danube, and then we sail down that river for two hundred and fifty miles to Vienna.

"*Cologne, 23d March.*

"We came hither last night, and have travelled through an extreme pleasant country along the banks of the Rhine. Particularly Cleves, which belongs to the King of Prussia, is very agreeable, because of the beauty of the roads, which are avenues bordered with fine trees. The land in that province is not fertile, but is well cultivated. The bishoprick of Cologne is more fertile and adorned with fine woods as well as Cleves. The country is all very populous, the houses good, and the inhabitants well clothed and well fed. This is one of the largest cities in Europe, being near a league in diameter. The houses are all high; and there is no interval of gardens or fields. So that you would expect it must be very populous. But it is not so. It is extremely decayed, and is even falling to ruin. Nothing can strike one with more melancholy than its appearance, where there are marks of past opulence and grandeur, but such present waste and decay, as if it had lately escaped a pestilence or famine. We are told, that it was formerly the centre of all the trade of the Rhine, which has been since removed to Holland, Liege, Frankfort, &c. Here we see the Rhine in its natural state; being only a little higher (but no broader) on account of the

melting of the snows. I think it is as broad as from the foot of your house to the opposite banks of the river."

"*Bonne, 24th March.*

"This is about six leagues from Cologne, a pleasant well-built little town, upon the banks of the Rhine, and is the seat of the archbishop. We have bestowed half a day in visiting his palace, which is an extensive magnificent building; and he is certainly the best lodged prince in Europe except the King of France. For, besides this palace, and a sort of Maison de Plaisance near it, (the most elegant thing in the world,) he has also two country houses very magnificent. He is the late emperor's brother; and is, as they say, a very fine gentleman;—a man of pleasure, very gallant and gay; he has always at his court a company of French comedians and Italian singers. And as he always keeps out of wars, being protected by the sacredness of his character, he has nothing to hope and nothing to fear; and seems to be the happiest prince in Europe. However, we could wish he took a little more care of his high-ways, even though his furniture, pictures, and building were a little less elegant. We are got into a country where we have no fires but stoves; and no covering but feather beds; neither of which I like, both of them are too warm and suffocating."

"*Coblentz, 26th March.*

"We have made the pleasantest journey in the world in two days from Bonne to this town. We travel all along the banks of the Rhine; sometimes in open, beautiful, well-cultivated plains; at another time sunk betwixt high mountains, which are only divided by the

Rhine, the finest river in the world. One of these mountains is always covered with wood to the top; the other with vines; and the mountain is so steep that they are obliged to support the earth by walls, which rise one above another like terraces to the length of forty or fifty stories. Every quarter of a mile, (indeed as often as there is any flat bottom for a foundation,) you meet with a handsome village, situated in the most romantic manner in the world. Surely there never was such an assemblage of the wild and cultivated beauties in one scene. There are also several magnificent convents and palaces to embellish the prospects.

"This is a very thriving well-built town, situated at the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine, and consequently very finely situated. Over the former river there is a handsome stone bridge; over the latter a flying bridge, which is a boat fixed by a chain: this chain is fixed by an anchor to the bottom of the middle of the river far above, and is supported by seven little boats placed at intervals that keep it along the surface of the water. By means of the rudder, they turn the head of the large boat to the opposite bank, and the current of the river carries it over of itself. It goes over in about four minutes, and will carry four or five hundred people. It stays about five or six minutes and then returns. Two men are sufficient to guide it, and it is certainly a very pretty machine. There is the like at Cologne. This town is the common residence of the Archbishop of Treves, who has here a pretty magnificent palace. We have now travelled along a great part of that country, through which the Duke of Marlborough marched up his army, when he led them into Bavaria. 'Tis of this country Mr. Addison speaks when he calls the people—

Nations of slaves by Tyranny debased,
Their Maker's image more than half-defaced.

And he adds that the soldiers were—

Hourly instructed as they urge their toil,
To prize their Queen and love their native soil.

"If any foot soldier could have more ridiculous national prejudices than the poet, I should be much surprised. Be assured there is not a finer country in the world; nor are there any signs of poverty among the people. But John Bull's prejudices are ridiculous, as his insolence is intolerable."

"*Frankfort, 28th March.*

"Our road from Coblentz to this passes through a great many princes' territories; Nassau's, Hesse's, Baden's, Mentz, and this Republic, &c. and there is as great a diversity in the nature of the country. The first part of the road from Coblentz to Weis-Baden is very mountainous and woody, but populous and well-cultivated. In many places the snow is lying very thick. The road is disagreeable for a coach; sometimes you go along the side of a hill with a precipice below you, and have not an inch to spare; and the road hanging all the way towards the precipice, so that one had need to have a good head to look out of the windows. Nassau, the prince of Orange's capital, is but a village, and one of the most indifferent I have seen in Germany. Betwixt Weis-Baden and Frankfort we travel along the banks of the Maine, and see one of the finest plains in the world. I never saw such rich soil nor better cultivated; all in corn and sown grass. For we have not met with any natural grass in Germany.

"Frankfort is a very large town, well-built and of

great riches and commerce. Around it there are several little country houses of the citizens, the first of that kind we have seen in Germany; for every body, except the farmers, live in towns, and these dwell all in villages. Whether this be for company or protection, or devotion, I cannot tell. But it has certainly its inconveniences. Princes have also seats in the country, and monks have their convents; but no private gentleman ever dwells there. To-morrow we pass over the field of Dettingen. We saw Heighst [Höchst] to-day, where Lord Stair past the Maine, and was recalled. The post he took seems not so good as we have heard it represented. We saw General Mordaunt at Cologne, who was at the battle of Dettingen, and gave us an exact description of the whole, which we are to-morrow to compare with the field. Frankfort is a Protestant town."

"*Wurtzburg, 30th March.*

"The first town we come to after leaving Frankfort is Hanau, which belongs to the Landgrave of Hesse, and where there is a palace, that may lodge any king in Europe, though the Landgrave never almost lives there. Hanau is a very beautiful, well-built, but not large town, on the banks of the Maine. All the houses almost in Germany are of plaster, either upon brick or wood, but very neatly done, and many of them painted over, which makes them look very gay. Their peasants' houses are sometimes plaster, sometimes clay upon wood, two stories high, and look very well.

Next post beyond Hanau is the village of Dettingen, where we walked out and surveyed the field of battle,[1]

[1] This celebrated battle took place nearly five years before Hume's visit to the field. It was fought on 26th June, 1743.

accompanied with the postmaster, who saw the battle from his windows. Good God, what an escape we made there! The Maine is a large river not fordable; this lay on our left hand. On our right, high mountains covered with thick wood, for several leagues. The plain is not half a mile broad. The French were posted by Noailles with their right supported by the river and the village of Dettingen; their left by the mountains; on their front a little rivulet, which formed some marshes and meadows altogether impassable for the cavalry, and passable with difficulty by the infantry. Add to this, that their cannon, played in safety on the other side of the Maine, raked the whole plain before Dettingen, and took our army in flank. Noailles had past the bridge of Aschaffenbourg which was not broke down, and came up upon our rear; and our army was starving for want of provisions.

"Such an arrangement of circumstances, as it were contrived to ruin an army, a king and kingdom, never was before found in the world; and yet there we gained a victory, by the folly of Grammont, who past that rivulet, and met us in the open plain, before Noailles had come up. We were travelling in great security, notwithstanding two repeated informations that the French had past the Maine; the baggage of the army was betwixt the two lines; and when the first cannons were fired, Neuperg and Stair both agreed that it could be nothing but the French signal guns. But when they were certain that the affair was more in earnest, Stair said, 'Go to the king; I take nothing upon me.' Clayton said, 'I will take it upon me, to remove the baggage.' And it was he that made the little disposition that was made that day. The English behaved ill: the French worse, which gave us

the victory. But this victory so unexpectedly gained, we pushed not as we ought, by the counsel of Neuperg. What Lord Stair's whim was to advance to Aschaffenbourg, where he was twenty-five miles from Frankfort, the place of all his magazines, 'tis impossible to imagine. Surely he could advance no farther, as he must have been convinced had he reconnoitred the road. It runs over high mountains, and for twenty-five miles through the thickest woods in the world.

"There is a pass three or four miles beyond Aschaffenbourg, where no army could go with cannon and baggage. When we[1] came to the foot of it a trumpeter met us, who played a tune for joy of our safe arrival; and the like on our ascending the opposite hill. The woods beyond are the finest I ever saw. Wurtzburg is a very well-built town, situated in a fine valley on the Maine. The banks of the river are very high, and covered with vines. The river runs through the town, and is passed on a very handsome bridge. But what renders this town chiefly remarkable, is a building which surprised us all, because we had never before heard of it, and did not there expect to meet with such a thing. 'Tis a prodigious magnificent palace of the bishop who is the sovereign. 'Tis all of hewn stone and of the richest architecture. I do think the king of France has not such a house. If it be less than Versailles, 'tis more complete and finished. What a surprising thing it is, that these petty princes can build such palaces: but it has been fifty years a rearing; and 'tis the chief expense of ecclesiastics. The bishop of Wurtzburg is chosen from amongst the canons, who have a very good artifice

[1] The "we," must now be held no more to apply to our army, as it has heretofore done, in reference to the battle, but to General St. Clair's party.

to exclude princes. 'Tis a rule, that every one at entering shall receive a very hearty drubbing from the rest: the brother of the elector of Bavaria offered a million of florins, to be exempted from the ceremony, and could not prevail."

"*Ratisbon, 2d April.*

"We were all very much taken with the town of Nuremberg, where we lay two nights ago; the houses, though old-fashioned, and of a grotesque figure, (having sometimes five or six stories of garrets,) yet are they solid, well built, complete, and cleanly. The people are handsome, well clothed, and well fed; an air of industry and contentment, without splendour, prevails through the whole. 'Tis a Protestant republic on the banks of a river, (whose name I have forgot,[1]) that runs into the Maine, and is navigable for boats. The town is of a large extent. On leaving Nuremberg we entered into the elector of Bavaria's country, where the contrast appeared very strong with the inhabitants of the former republic. There was a great air of poverty in every face; the first poverty indeed we had seen in Germany. We travelled also through part of the elector Palatine's country, and then returned to Bavaria; but though the country be good and well cultivated, and populous, the inhabitants are not at their ease. The late miserable wars have no doubt hurt them much. Ratisbon is a catholic republic situated on the banks of the Danube. The houses and buildings, and aspect of the people, are well enough, though not comparable to those of Nuremberg. 'Tis pretended that the difference is always sensible betwixt a Protestant and Catholic country, throughout all Germany; and perhaps there may be some-

[1] The Pegnitz.

thing in this observation, though it is not every where sensible.

"We descend the Danube from this to Vienna; we go in a large boat about eighty foot long, where we have three rooms, one for ourselves, a second for the servants, and a third for our kitchen. 'Tis made entirely of fir boards, and is pulled to pieces at Vienna, the wood sold, and the watermen return to Ratisbon a-foot. We lie on shore every night. We are all glad of this variety, being a little tired of our berline."

"*The Danube, 7th of April.*

"We have really made a very pleasant journey, or rather voyage, with good weather, sitting at our ease, and having a variety of scenes continually presented to us, and immediately shifted, as it were in an opera. The banks of the Danube are very wild and savage, and have a very different beauty from those of the Rhine; being commonly high scraggy precipices, covered all with firs. The water is sometimes so straitened betwixt these mountains, that this immense river is often not sixty foot broad. We have lain in and seen several very good towns in Bavaria and Austria, such as Strauburg, Passau, Lintz; but what is most remarkable is the great magnificence of some convents, particularly Moelk, where a set of lazy rascals of monks live in the most splendid misery of the world; for, generally speaking, their lives are as little to be envied as their persons are to be esteemed.

"We enter Vienna in a few hours, and the country is here extremely agreeable; the fine plains of the Danube began about thirty miles above, and continued down, through Austria, Hungary, &c. till it falls into

the Black Sea. The river is very magnificent. Thus we have finished a very agreeable journey of 860 miles (for so far is Vienna from the Hague,) have past through many a prince's territories, and have had more masters than many of these princes have subjects. Germany is undoubtedly a very fine country, full of industrious honest people; and were it united, it would be the greatest power that ever was in the world. The common people are here, almost every where, much better treated, and more at their ease, than in France; and are not very much inferior to the English, notwithstanding all the airs the latter give themselves. There are great advantages in travelling, and nothing serves more to remove prejudices; for I confess I had entertained no such advantageous idea of Germany; and it gives a man of humanity pleasure to see that so considerable a part of mankind as the Germans are in so tolerable a condition."

"*Vienna, 15th April.*

"The last week was Easter week, and every body was at their devotions, so that we saw not the court nor the emperor and empress, till yesterday, when we were all introduced by Sir Thomas Robinson.[1]

[1] Sir Thomas Robinson, whose name has dropped out of recollection in the ordinary biographical dictionaries, but is still familiar to the readers of the history of the period, was for some time ambassador at Vienna, and was plenipotentiary from Britain at the treaty of Aix La Chapelle in 1748. In 1754 he became secretary of state for a few months. In 1761 he was raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Grantham. "Sir Thomas," says Walpole, "had been bred in German courts, and was rather restored than naturalized to the genius of that country; he had German honour, loved German politics, and could explain himself as little as if he spoke only German."—Memoires of George III. 337. According to the same authority, he was subjected, on account of his name, to an identification with Robinson Crusoe, something like that with which

They are a well-looked couple, the emperor has a great air of goodness, and his royal consort of spirit. Her voice, and manner, and address are the most agreeable that can be, and she made us several compliments on our nation. She is not a beauty; but, being a sovereign, and a woman of sense and spirit, no wonder she has met such extraordinary support from her subjects, as well as from some other nations of Europe. However, the English gallantry towards her is a little relaxed; and the King of Sardinia is their present favourite. She begged of the general not to be so much her enemy as his predecessor, General Wentworth, had been. He replied, that a perfect impartiality was recommended him by the king, his master; and that he was resolved to preserve it, though he confessed that was difficult for a person who had had the honour of having had access to her imperial majesty.

"We were introduced to-day to the archdukes and archduchesses (who are fine children) and to the empress-dowager. She had seen no company for two months; but, hearing that Englishmen desired to be introduced to her, she immediately received us.

Madame Talleyrand honoured Denon, owing to the accident of his being a great traveller whose name ended in "on."

"Sir T. Robinson was a tall uncouth man, and his stature was often rendered still more remarkable by his hunting dress, a postilion's cap, a tight green jacket, and buckskin breeches. He was liable to sudden whims; and once set off on a sudden, in his hunting suit, to visit his sister, who was married and settled at Paris. He arrived while there was a large company at dinner. The servant announced Mr. Robinson, and he came in, to the great amazement of the guests. Among others a French abbé thrice lifted his fork to his mouth, and thrice laid it down, with an eager stare of surprise. Unable to restrain his curiosity any longer, he burst out with, "Excuse me, sir; are you the famous Robinson Crusoe so remarkable in history." — Walpoliana.

You must know that you neither bow nor kneel to emperors and empresses, but curtsy; so that, after we had had a little conversation with her imperial majesty, we were to walk backwards through a very long room, curtsying all the way, and there was very great danger of our falling foul of each other, as well as of tumbling topsy-turvy. She saw the difficulty we were in; and immediately called to us: 'Allez, allez, Messieurs, sans cérémonie; vous n'êtes pas accoutumés a ce mouvement, et le plancher est glissant.' We esteemed ourselves very much obliged to her for this attention, especially my companions, who were desperately afraid of my falling on them and crushing them.

"This court is fine, without being gay; and the company is very accessible, without being very sociable. When we were to be introduced to the emperor and empress, Sir Thomas Robinson gathered us all together into a window, that he might be able to carry us to them at once, when the time should be proper. A lady came up to him, and asked him if these were not his chickens he was gathering under his wings, after which she joined conversation with us; and in a little time asked us, if we had any acquaintance of the ladies of the court, and if we should not be glad to know their names. We replied that she could not do us a greater favour. 'Why, then,' says she, 'I shall tell you, beginning with myself; I am the Countess' — she added her name, which I am sorry to have forgot. We have met with several instances of these agreeable liberties. The women here are many of them handsome; if you ever want toasts, please to name, upon my authority, Mademoiselle Staremberg, or the Countess Palfi.

"The men are ugly and awkward. We have seen

all those fierce heroes, whom we have so often read of in gazettes, the Lichtensteins, the Esterhasis, the Colloredos; most of them have red heels to their shoes, and wear very well-dressed toupees.

"I have heard Maly Johnston say she was told that she was very like the empress-queen. Please tell her it is not so. The empress, though not very well shaped, is better than Maly; but she has not so good a face. She looks also as if she were prouder and worse tempered. Apropos, to our friends of Hutton hall, inform them that they have a very near relation at this court, who is a prodigious fine gentleman, and a great fool. His name is Sir James Caldwell.[1] He told me his grandmother was a Hume, and that he expected soon to inherit a very fine estate by her, which he was to share with the Johnstones

[1] An Irish baronet, grandson of Sir James Caldwell who was created a baronet in 1683, and distinguished himself in the service of William III. during the Irish revolutionary wars. The person commemorated in so flattering a manner by Hume, rose to considerable rank in the service of the empress, and was enabled to introduce to that service a brother, who obtained in it far more distinction, and who, in connexion with the relationship mentioned above, was called Hume Caldwell. He seems to have been strongly endowed with the mercurial disposition of his countrymen. On his first introduction to the service, he "took expensive lodgings, kept a chariot, a running footman, and a hussar, and was admitted into the highest circles;" the natural result of which was, that, on preparing to join his regiment, when he paid his debts, he found that he had just two gold ducats left; whereupon, as his biographer pathetically narrates, "the companion of princes, the friend of Count Conigsegg, the possessor of a splendid hotel and a gilt chariot, who had kept a hussar and an opera girl, figured at court, and had an audience of the empress, and was possessed of a letter of credit for £1000, set out from Vienna alone, on foot, in a mean habit, and with an empty pocket, for that army in which he was to rise by his merit to a distinguished command." His subsequent history is a little romance. Mr. Hume Caldwell, being lost sight of by the great world, is searched for hither and thither, and at

in Scotland. But he says it is only Wynne that has the half, not the ladies, who have no share; so that you 'll please tell Sophy that I am off; and give her her liberty, notwithstanding all vows and promises that may have past betwixt us."

"*Vienna, 25th April.*

"We set out to-morrow, but go not by the way of Venice, as we at first proposed. This is some mortification to us. We shall go, however, by Milan. This town is very little for a capital, but excessively populous. The houses are very high, the streets very narrow and crooked, so that the many handsome buildings that are here, make not any figure. The suburbs are spacious and open; but, on the whole, I can never believe what they tell us, that there are two hundred thousand inhabitants in it. It is composed entirely of nobility and of lackeys, of soldiers and of priests. Now, I believe you 'll allow, that in a town inhabited only by these four sets of people above-mentioned, the empress-queen could not have undertaken a more difficult task, than that which she has magnanimously entered upon, viz. the producing an absolute chastity amongst them. A court of chastity is lately erected here, who send all loose women to the frontiers of Hungary, where they can only debauch Turks and Infidels. I hope you will not pay your taxes with greater grudge, because you hear that her imperial majesty, in whose service they are to be spent, is so great a prude.

"There has been great noise made with us on account of the queen's new palace at Schönbrunn.

length an Irish private soldier being questioned about the matter, turns out to be Caldwell himself, who is immediately restored to his proper station. — Ryan's Worthies of Ireland.

It is, indeed, a handsome house, but not very great nor richly furnished. She said to the general last night, that not a single soldier had gone to the building, whatever might be said in England, but that she liked better to be tolerably lodged than to have useless diamonds by her; and that she had sold all her crown jewels to enable her to be at that expense. I think, for a sovereign, she is none of the worst in Europe, and one cannot forbear liking her for the spirit with which she looks, and speaks, and acts. But 'tis a pity her ministers have so little sense.

"Prince Eugene's palace in the suburbs is an expensive stately building, but of a very barbarous Gothic taste. He was *more skilled in battering walls than building*, as was said of his friend, the Duke of Marlborough. There is a room in it, where all Prince Eugene's battles were painted: upon which the Portuguese ambassador told him, that the whole house was indeed richly furnished, but that all the kings in Europe could not furnish such a room as that. I have been pretty busy since I came here, and have regretted it the less that there is no very great amusement in this place. No Italian opera; no French comedy; no dancing. I have, however, heard Monticelli, who is the next wonder of the world to Farinelli."

"*Knittelfeldt in Styria, 28th April.*

"This is about a hundred and twenty miles from Vienna. The first forty is a fine well-cultivated plain, after which we enter the mountains; and, as we are told, we have three hundred miles more of them before we reach the plains of Lombardy. The way of travelling through a mountainous country is generally very agreeable. We are obliged to trace the course of the rivers, and are always in a pretty

valley surrounded by high hills; and have a constant and very quick succession of wild agreeable prospects every quarter of a mile. Through Styria nothing can be more curious than the scenes. In the valleys, which are fertile and finely cultivated, there is at present a full bloom of spring. The hills to a certain height are covered with firs and larch trees, the tops are all shining with snow. You may see a tree white with blossom, and, fifty fathom farther up, the ground white with snow. These hills, as you may imagine, give a great command of water to the valleys, which the industrious inhabitants distribute into every field, and render the whole very fertile. There are many iron mines in the country, and the valleys are upon that account extremely populous. But as much as the country is agreeable in its wildness, as much are the inhabitants savage, and deformed, and monstrous in their appearance. Very many of them have ugly swelled throats; idiots and deaf people swarm in every village; and the general aspect of the people is the most shocking I ever saw. One would think, that as this was the great road, through which all the barbarous nations made their irruptions into the Roman empire, they always left here the refuse of their armies before they entered into the enemy's country, and that from thence the present inhabitants are descended. Their dress is scarce European, as their figure is scarce human.

"There happened, however, a thing to-day, which surprised us all. The empress-queen, regarding this country as a little barbarous, has sent some missionaries of Jesuits to instruct them. They had sermons to-day in the street, under our windows, attended with psalms; and believe me, nothing could be more

harmonious, better tuned, or more agreeable than the voices of these savages; and the chorus of a French opera does not sing in better time. You may infer from thence, if you please, that Orpheus did not civilize the savage nations by his music. I know not what progress the Jesuits have made by their eloquence; but it appears to me that religion is not the point in which the Styrians are defective, at least if we may judge by the number of their churches, crucifixes, &c. We shall be detained here some days by Sir Harry Erskine's illness, who is seized with an ague."

"*Clagenfurt in Carinthia, May* 4.

"This is a mighty pretty little town, near the Drave. It is the capital of the province, and stands in a tolerable large plain, surrounded with very high hills; and on the other side the Drave we see the savage Mountains of Carniola. You know the Alps join with the Pyrenees, these with the Alps,[1] and run all along the north of Turkey in Europe to the Black Sea, and form the longest chain of mountains in the universe.

"The figure of the Carinthians is not much better than that of the Styrians."

"*Trent, 8th of May.*

"We are still amongst mountains, and follow the tract of rivers in order to find our way. But the aspect of the people is wonderfully changed on entering the Tyrol. The inhabitants are there as remarkably beautiful as the Styrians are ugly. An air of humanity, and spirit, and health, and plenty, is seen in every face. Yet their country is wilder than Styria, the hills higher, and the valleys narrower and

[1] Sic in MS. Perhaps he meant to allude to the junction with the Carpathians through the Bohemian ranges.

more barren. They are both Germans, subject to the house of Austria; so that it would puzzle a naturalist or politician to find the reason of so great and remarkable a difference. We traced up the Drave to its source: (that river, you know, falls into the Danube, and into the Black Sea.) It ended in a small rivulet, and that in a ditch, and then in a little bog. On the top of the hill (though there was there a well cultivated plain) there was no more appearance of spring than at Christmas. In about half a mile after we had seen the Drave extinguish, we observed a little stripe of water to move. This was the beginning of the Adige, and the rivers that run into the Adriatic. We were now turning toward the south part of the hill, and descended with great rapidity. Our little brook in three or four miles became a considerable river, and every hour's travelling showed us a new aspect of spring; so that in one day we passed through all the gradations of that beautiful season, as we descended lower into the valleys, from its first faint dawn till its full bloom and glory. We are here in Italy; at least the common language of the people is Italian. This town is not remarkable neither for size nor beauty. 'Tis only famous for that wise assembly of philosophers and divines, who established such rational tenets for the belief of mankind."

"*Mantua*, 11*th of May*.

"We are now in classic ground; and I have kissed the earth that produced Virgil, and have admired those fertile plains that he has so finely celebrated.

Perdidit aut quales felices Mantua campos.[1]

"You are tired, and so am I, with the descriptions of countries; and therefore shall only say, that no-

[1] Et qualem infelix amisit Mantua campum. Georg. ii. 198?

thing can be more singularly beautiful than the plains of Lombardy, nor more beggarly and miserable than this town."

"*Cremona*, 12*th of May*.

"Alas, poor Italy!

Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit;
Barbarus has segetes?

The poor inhabitant
Starves, in the midst of Nature's plenty curst;
And in the loaded vineyard dies for thirst.

"The taxes are here exorbitant beyond all bounds. We lie to-morrow at Milan."

"*Turin, June* 16*th*, 1748.

"I wrote you about three weeks ago. This is brought into England by Mr. Bathurst, a nephew of Lord Bathurst, who intended to serve a campaign in our family. We know nothing as yet of the time of our return. But I believe we shall make the tour of Italy and France before we come home. 'Tis thought the general will be sent as public minister to settle Don Philip; so that we shall have seen a great variety of Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish, and French courts in this jaunt.

Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes.

"I say nothing of Milan, or Turin, or Piedmont: because I shall have time enough to entertain you with accounts of all these. Though you may be little diverted with this long epistle, you ought at least to thank me for the pains I have taken in composing it. I have not yet got my baggage."

Far different was the pomp and circumstance in which the writer of this narrative performed his

journey, from the condition in which Goldsmith, four years afterwards, pursued nearly the same route to—

> —— where the rude Carinthian boor
> Against the houseless stranger shuts the door.

And Hume's motions seem to have partaken of the pomp and regularity of his official station; for, even in these familiar letters to his brother, he is all along the secretary of legation; or when he descends from that height, it is but to mount the chair of the scholar and philosopher. There are no escapades. We never hear that he has taken it in his head to diverge from the regular route to see an old castle or a waterfall. Yet he went with an eye for scenery. The Alpine passes excited his admiration, and his description of the banks of the Rhine will be recognised at this day as very accurate—with one material exception. He says nothing of the feudal fortresses perched like the nests of birds of prey, to which their moral resemblance was at least as close as their physical; and thus one of the greatest historians of his age, passes through a country without appearing to have noticed in their true character, this series of prominent marks of a remarkable chapter in the history of Europe. He speaks of them simply as "palaces"—a word not designative of the character of the buildings, or in any way evincing that their historical position had occurred to his mind. But it must be admitted, that later tourists on the Rhine have amply made up for his silence on these matters.

He does not condescend to mention any one of the fine specimens of Gothic architecture which he must have seen—not even that vast and beautiful fragment the cathedral of Cologne. One wonders whether or not he was at the trouble of inquiring, what was

that huge mass which he must have seen towering over the city; and if, straying within its gates, and looking on Albert Durer's painted windows, he had curiosity enough to inspect the reliquary of the tomb of the three kings, containing gems so ancient, that they are conjectured to be older than Christianity, and to have been the ornaments of some Pagan shrine, transferred to and historically associated with the pure creed which displaced the barbarous rites of Paganism. This might have at least formed a curious topic for his Natural History of Religion. But on this as on many other subjects, he would sympathize with La Bruyere when he speaks of "L'ordre Gothique, que la barbarie avoit introduit pour les palais et pour les temples;" and his thorough neglect of both the baronial and ecclesiastical architecture of the middle ages, is characteristic of a mind which could find nothing worthy of admiration, in the time which elapsed between the extinction of ancient classical literature, and the rise of the arts and sciences in modern Europe.

But upon scarcely any subject does Hume converse as a brother travelling into foreign lands might be supposed to address a brother residing at home, and cultivating his ancestral acres. We should expect to find him observing that this river is like the Tweed, or unlike it—larger or smaller; or comparing some range of hills with the Cheviots: but he is general and undomestic in all his remarks, save the one observation that the Rhine is as broad as from his brother's house to the opposite side of the river.

Until he comes to the land of Virgil, where he shows real enthusiasm, the chief object of his interest and observation appears to have been the warlike operations in the midst of which he found himself.

The mission must have been attended with the ordinary dangers of a military enterprise. It was undertaken at a time when all Europe was at war, and though decisive battles were not taking place, petty conflicts and surprises were of perpetual occurrence until the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, a few months afterwards, restored repose to the exhausted nations. Yet we find no symptoms of anxiety in the mind of the philosophical actor of the military character. His tone is generally that of a private traveller in a peaceful country, rather than that of a member of an expedition armed for defence, and likely to be called on to defend itself. When he mentions warlike operations, he adopts the tone of a historical critic, and never that of a person who may find his personal safety or comfort compromised by them.

Though he seems to have set out with the too general notion that military affairs are the main object of attention to the man who is desirous of distinction in historical literature, we find already dawning on him the historian's nobler duty as a delineator of the state of society, and an inquirer into the causes of the happiness or misery of the people. And his observations are made with a wide and generous benevolence, strikingly at contrast with those prevailing doctrines of his day, which sought, in the success and happiness of one country, the elements of the misery of another, and made the good fortune of our neighbours a source of lamentation, as indicating calamity to ourselves. His unaffected declaration of pleasure, in finding the Germans so happy and comfortable a people, marks a heart full of genuine kindness and benevolence, and will more than atone for the want of a disposition to range

through alpine scenery, or a taste to appreciate the beauties of Gothic architecture.

It will be seen that Hume had intended to continue his journal, but no farther trace of it has been found. The results of the mission have not been generally noticed by historians. Its objects were of a subordinate nature, and the occasion for attending to them was obviated by the completion of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle on 7th October.

Meanwhile, of Hume's residence in Turin, we have some notices by an able observer, Lord Charlemont, the celebrated Irish political leader, who, then in his twentieth year, was following the practice of the higher aristocracy of his age, and endeavouring to enlarge his mind by foreign travel. In the following probably exaggerated description it will be seen that he was far mistaken in his estimate of Hume's age.

"With this extraordinary man I was intimately acquainted. He had kindly distinguished me from among a number of young men, who were then at the academy, and appeared so warmly attached to me, that it was apparent he not only intended to honour me with his friendship, but to bestow on me what was, in his opinion, the first of all favours and benefits, by making me his convert and disciple.

"Nature, I believe, never formed any man more unlike his real character than David Hume. The powers of physiognomy were baffled by his countenance; neither could the most skilful in that science, pretend to discover the smallest trace of the faculties of his mind, in the unmeaning features of his visage. His face was broad and fat, his mouth wide, and without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless, and the corpulence of his

whole person, was far better fitted to communicate the idea of a turtle-eating alderman, than of a refined philosopher. His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent, and his French was, if possible, still more laughable; so that wisdom most certainly never disguised herself before in so uncouth a garb. Though now near fifty years old, he was healthy and strong; but his health and strength, far from being advantageous to his figure, instead of manly comeliness, had only the appearance of rusticity. His wearing an uniform added greatly to his natural awkwardness, for he wore it like a grocer of the trained bands. Sinclair was a lieutenant-general, and was sent to the courts of Vienna and Turin, as a military envoy, to see that their quota of troops was furnished by the Austrians and Piedmontese. It was therefore thought necessary that his secretary should appear to be an officer, and Hume was accordingly disguised in scarlet."[1]

CHAPTER VII.

1748—1751. Æt. 37—40.

Publication of the "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding"—Nature of that Work—Doctrine of Necessity—Observations on Miracles—New Edition of the "Essays, Moral and Political"—Reception of the new Publications—Return Home—His Mother's Death—Her Talents and Character—Correspondence with Dr. Clephane—Earthquakes—Correspondence with Montesquieu—Practical jokes in connexion with the Westminster Election—John Home—The Bellman's Petition.

Early in the year 1748, and while he was on his way to Turin, Hume's "Philosophical Essays con-

[1] Memoirs of the Political and Private Life of James Caulfield, Earl of Charlemont, by Francis Hardy, p. 8.

cerning Human Understanding,"[1] which he afterwards styled "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding," were published anonymously in London. The preparation of this work had probably afforded him a much larger share of genuine pleasure, than either the excitement of travelling, or the observation of the natural scenery, the works of art, and the men and manners among which he moved. In the tone of a true philosophical enthusiast, he says in the first section of the work, "Were there no advantage to be reaped from these studies beyond the gratification of an innocent curiosity, yet ought not even this to be despised, as being an accession to those few safe and harmless pleasures which are bestowed on the human race. The sweetest and most inoffensive path of life leads through the avenues of science and learning; and whoever can either remove any obstructions in this way, or open up any new prospect, ought so far to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind. And though these researches may appear painful and fatiguing, it is with some minds as with some bodies, which being endowed with vigorous and florid health, require

[1] "By the author of The Essays Moral and Political," 8vo. Printed for Andrew Millar. Hume's complaints about the obscurity of all his books anterior to the "Political Discourses" and the History, seem to be confirmed by the absence of this Edition in places where such books are expected to be found. It is not in The Advocates' or The Signet libraries in Edinburgh, nor is it to be found in the catalogues of the British Museum or Bodleyan. Did I not possess the book, I might have found it difficult to obtain an authenticated copy of the title-page. It is not mentioned in Watt's Bibliotheca; but it will be found correctly set forth in a German bibliographical work, infinitely superior to any we possess in this country, but unfortunately not completed. Adelung's Supplement to Jöchers Allgemeines Gelehrten Lexicon. It appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, list of books for April.

severe exercise, and reap a pleasure from what, to the generality of mankind, may seem burdensome and laborious."

On the publication of this work, he says in his "own life,"—"I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the 'Treatise of Human Nature,' had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the 'Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,' which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the 'Treatise of Human Nature.' On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's 'Free Inquiry,'[1] while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected."

He now desired that the "Treatise of Human Nature" should be treated as a work blotted out of literature, and that the "Inquiry" should be substituted in its place. In the subsequent editions of the latter work, he complained that this had not been complied with; that the world still looked at those forbidden volumes of which he had dictated the suppression. "Henceforth," he says, "the author desires that the following pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical principles and sentiments;" and he became eloquent on the uncandidness of bringing before the

[1] "A Free Inquiry into the miraculous powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, from the earliest ages through several successive centuries," by Conyers Middleton, D.D. London, 1748-1749, 4to.

It was encountered by a perfect hurricane of controversial tracts, which fill all the book lists of the time.

world as the sentiments of any author, a work written almost in boyhood, and printed at the threshold of manhood. But it was all in vain: he had to learn that the world takes possession of all that has passed through the gates of the printing press, and that neither the command of despotic authority, nor the solicitations of repentant authorship can reclaim it, if it be matter of sterling value. The bold and original speculations of the "Treatise" have been, and to all appearance ever will be, part of the intellectual property of man; great theories have been built upon them, which must be thrown down before we can raze the foundation. That he repented of having published the work, and desired to retract its extreme doctrines, is part of the mental biography of Hume; but it is impossible, at his command, to detach this book from general literature, or to read it without remembering who was its author.

But, indeed, there were pretty cogent reasons why the philosophical world, and Hume's opponents in particular, should not lose sight of his early work. In the Inquiry, he did not revoke the fundamental doctrines of his first work. The elements of all thought and knowledge he still found to be in impressions and ideas. But he did not on this occasion carry out his principles with the same reckless hardihood that had distinguished the Treatise; and thus he neither on the one side gave so distinct and striking a view of his system, nor on the other afforded so strong a hold to his adversaries. This hold they were resolved not to lose; and therefore they retained the original bond, and would not accept of the offered substitute.

Of those views which are more fully developed in the Inquiry than in the early work, one of the most important is the attempt to establish the doctrine of

necessity, and to refute that of free will in relation to the springs of human action. To those who adopted the vulgar notion of Hume's theory of cause and effect, that it left the phenomena of nature without a ruling principle, the attempt to show that the human mind was bound by necessary laws appeared to be a startling inconsistency — a sort of reversal of the poet's idea,

> And binding nature fast in fate,
> Left free the human will.

It appeared to remove the chains of necessity from inanimate nature, and rivet them on the will.

But there is a decided principle of connexion between the two doctrines: whether or not it be a principle that will bear scrutiny, is another question. The two systems are identified with each other, simply by the annihilation of the notion of power both in the material and in the immaterial world. As we cannot find in physical causes any power to produce their effect, so when a man moves his arm to strike, or his tongue to reprimand, we have no notion of any *power* being exercised; but we have an impression that certain impulses are followed, and we can no more suppose that it was at the choice of the individual whether, when these impulses or motives existed, they should or should not be obeyed, than that when the phenomenon called in the material world the cause, made its appearance, there could be any doubt of its being followed by the effect. The inference from this was, that human actions are as much the objects of inductive philosophy as the operations of nature; that they are equally regular, effect following cause as much in the operations of the passions as in those of the elements. Of the application of the

theory to his historical observation of events, the following passage is a vivid enunciation: —

"It is universally acknowledged, that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? study well the temper and actions of the French and English: you cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations, and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. Nor are the earth, water,

and other elements, examined by Aristotle and Hippocrates, more like to those which at present lie under our observation, than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world.

"Should a traveller, returning from a far country, bring us an account of men wholly different from any with whom we were ever acquainted, men who were entirely divested of avarice, ambition, or revenge, who knew no pleasure but friendship, generosity, and public spirit, we should immediately, from these circumstances, detect the falsehood, and prove him a liar, with the same certainty as if he had stuffed his narration with stories of centaurs and dragons, miracles and prodigies. And if we would explode any forgery in history, we cannot make use of a more convincing argument than to prove, that the actions ascribed to any person are directly contrary to the course of nature, and that no human motives, in such circumstances, could ever induce him to such a conduct. The veracity of Quintus Curtius is as much to be suspected, when he describes the supernatural courage of Alexander, by which he was hurried on singly to attack multitudes, as when he describes his supernatural force and activity, by which he was able to resist them. So readily and universally do we acknowledge a uniformity in human motives and actions, as well as in the operations of body.

"Hence, likewise, the benefit of that experience, acquired by long life and a variety of business and company, in order to instruct us in the principles of human nature, and regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation. By means of this guide we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures; and again descend to the interpretation of their

actions, from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. The general observations, treasured up by a course of experience, give us the clue of human nature, and teach us to unravel all its intricacies. Pretexts and appearances no longer deceive us. Public declarations pass for the specious colouring of a cause. And though virtue and honour be allowed their proper weight and authority, that perfect disinterestedness, so often pretended to, is never expected in multitudes and parties, seldom in their leaders, and scarcely even in individuals of any rank or station. But were there no uniformity in human actions, and were every experiment, which we could form of this kind, irregular and anomalous, it were impossible to collect any general observations concerning mankind; and no experience, however accurately digested by reflection, would ever serve to any purpose. Why is the aged husbandman more skilful in his calling than the young beginner, but because there is a certain uniformity in the operation of the sun, rain, and earth, towards the production of vegetables; and experience teaches the old practitioner the rules by which this operation is governed and directed?"[1]

How very clearly we find these principles practically illustrated in his History! A disinclination to believe in the narratives of great and remarkable deeds proceeding from peculiar impulses: a propensity, when the evidence adduced in their favour cannot be rebutted, to treat these peculiarities rather as diseases of the mind, than as the operation of noble aspirations: a levelling disposition to find all men pretty much upon a par, and none in a marked manner better or worse than their neighbours: an inclination to doubt all

[1] Inquiry concerning Human Understanding, sect. viii.

authorities which tended to prove that the British people had any fundamental liberties not possessed by the French and other European nations. Such are the practical fruits of this necessitarian philosophy.

It was on this occasion that Hume promulgated those opinions upon miracles, which we have found him afraid to make public even in that work of which he afterwards regretted the bold and rash character. No part of his writings gave more offence to serious and devout thinkers; but the offence was in the manner of the promulgation, not the matter of the opinions. To understand how this occurred, let us cast a glance for a moment at two opposite classes of religious thinkers, into which a large portion of the Christian world is divided, and find with which, if with either, Hume's opinions coincide.

If we suppose a man, impressed with a feeling of devotion and reverence for a Superior Being, who, seeing in the order of the world and all its movements, the omnipotent, all-wise, and all-merciful guidance of a divine Providence, believes that the Great Being will give to his creatures no revelation that is not in accordance with the merciful harmony of all his ways; and thus devoutly and submissively receives the word of God as promulgated in the Bible; attempts to make it the rule of his actions and opinions; receives with deference the views of those whom the same power that authorized it, has permitted to be the human instruments of its promulgation and explanation; tries to understand what it is within the power of his limited faculties to comprehend; but, implicitly believing that in the shadows of those mysteries which he is unable to penetrate, there lie operations as completely part of one great regular plan, as merciful, as beneficent, and as wise as the outward and comprehensible acts of

Providence; who thus never for one moment allows his mind to doubt, where it is unable to comprehend or explain — such a man finds none of his sentiments in the writings of Hume, for he is at once told there that reason and revelation are two disconnected things, that each must act alone, and that the one derives no aid from the other.

But take one who believes that religion is too sacred to be in any way allied with so poor and miserable a thing as erring human reason; who feels that it is not in himself to merit any of the boundless mercies of the atonement; and that to endeavour by his actions, or the direction of his thoughts, to be made a participator in them, is but setting blind reason to lead the blind appetites and desires; who feels that by no act of his own, the true light of the Christian religion has been lighted within him as by a miracle; who has been adopted by a sudden change in his spiritual nature into the family of the faithful—then there is nothing in all Hume's philosophy to militate against the religion of such a man, but rather many arguments in its favour, both implied and expressed.

Since this is the case, it may be asked, why, if one party in religion attacked the opinions of Hume, another did not defend them? why, if Beattie and Warburton couched the lance, Whitefield and John Erskine did not come forward as his champions? In the first place, it was only those who united reason and revelation as going hand in hand and aiding each other, that looked at books of philosophy with an eye to their influence on religion, and such works formed a department of literature in which the advocates of "eternal decrees" would not expect to find much to suit their purpose. But, in the second place, this class of religious thinkers are all, except the few

who are hypocrites, devout and serious people, and Hume's method of treating these subjects was not such as they could feel a sympathy with. A want of proper deference for devotional feeling, is a defect that runs through all his works — a constitutional organic defect it might be termed. There is no ribaldry, but at the same time there are no expressions of decent reverence; while this religious party knew from the manner in which their predecessors in the same doctrines were historically treated by Hume, that if there were any coincidence in abstract opinions, there was very little in common between their sympathies and his.

In this same section on miracles, there are repeated protests against the reader assuming that the writer is arguing against the Christian faith. Against some Catholic miracles, which were asserted to be proved by testimony as strong as that which attested the miracles of our Saviour, he says, "As if the testimony of man could ever be put in the balance with that of God himself, who conducted the pen of the inspired writers!" and again, "Our most holy religion is founded on *faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure." These protests however were made briefly and coldly, and in such a manner as made people feel, that if Hume believed in the doctrines they announced, he certainly had not his heart in them. Hence, although, since the origin of rationalism, evangelical Christians have frequently had recourse to the arguments of Hume, there was long in that quarter a not unnatural reluctance to appeal to them.

It is perhaps one of the most remarkable warnings against hasty judgments on the effects of efforts of subtle reasoning, that, according to later scientific

discoveries, no two things are in more perfect unison than Hume's theory of belief in miracles, and the belief that miracles, according to the common acceptation of the term, have actually taken place. The leading principle of this theory is, in conformity with its author's law of cause and effect, that where our experience has taught us that two things follow each other as cause and effect by an unvarying sequence, if we hear of an instance in which this has not been the case, we ought to doubt the truth of the narrative. In other words, if we are told of some circumstance having taken place out of the usual order of nature, we ought not to believe it; because the circumstance of the narrator having been deceived, or of his designedly telling a falsehood, is more probable than an event contradictory to all previous authenticated experience. It is a rule for marking the boundary and proper application of the inductive system, and one that is highly serviceable to science. But, in applying it to use, we must not be led away by the narrow application, in common conversation, of the word experience. There is the experience of the common workman, and there is the experience of the philosopher. There is that observation of phenomena which makes a ditcher know that the difficulty of pulling out a loosened stone with a mattock indicates it to be so many inches thick; and that observation, fully as sure, which shows the geologist that the stratum of the Pennsylvanian grauwacke is upwards of a hundred miles thick. The experience and observation of the husbandman teach him, that when the opposite hill is distinct to his view, the intervening atmosphere is not charged with vapour; but observation, not less satisfactory, shows the astronomer that Jupiter and the Moon have around them no atmosphere such as

that by which our planet is enveloped. Now there is nothing more fully founded on experimental observation than the fact, that there was a time when the present order of the world was not in existence. That there have been convulsions, such as, did we now hear of their contemporary occurrence, instead of attesting their past existence through the sure course of observation and induction, we would at once maintain to be impossibile. To this then, and this only, comes the theory of miracles, that at the present day, and for a great many years back, the accounts that are given of circumstances having taken place out of the general order of nature, are to be discredited, because between the two things to be believed, the falsehood of the narrative is more likely than the truth of the occurrence. But the very means by which we arrive at this conclusion bring us to another, that there was a time to which the rules taken from present observation of the course of nature did not apply.[1]

That in history, in science, in the conduct of every-day life, and particularly in the formation of the minds of the young, this rule of belief is of the highest practical utility, few will doubt. The parish clergyman, who assists in throwing discredit on all the

[1] This matter seems on another occasion to have passed under his own view. In the "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion" he makes Philo say, "Strong and almost incontestable proofs may be traced over the whole earth, that every part of this globe has continued for many ages entirely covered with water. And though order were supposed inseparable from matter, and inherent in it, yet may matter be susceptible of many and great revolutions through the endless periods of eternal duration." That even Hume's argument makes allowance for miracles having some time or other existed, and that it can only be urged against this or that individual statement of an unnatural occurrence, is the weapon which Campbell wields with chief effect in his admirable dissertation.

superstitious stories of spectres, witchcrafts, and demoniacal possessions with which his neighbourhood may be afflicted, is but an active promulgator of the doctrine. It was a narrow view that Campbell adopted when he said, that if we heard of a ferry boat, which had long crossed the stream in safety, having sunk, we would give credit to the testimony concerning it.[1] Our experience teaches us that ferry boats are made of perishable materials, liable to be submerged; and thus, in this case, there is no balance of incredibility against the narrator. To have tried Campbell's practical faith in Hume's theory, he should have had before him a person professing to have become aware of the sinking of the boat, by some unprecedented means of perception, called a magnetic influence, in the absence of a more distinct name; while it is shown that the same person had an opportunity of being informed, through the organs of hearing, of the circumstance which had taken place. It would then be seen, whether that sagacious philosopher would have given the sanction of his belief to a phenomenon contrary to all previous experience—the ascertainment of an external event, without the aid of the senses; or would have acceded to the too commonly illustrated

[1] "Let us try how his manner of argument on this point can be applied to a particular instance. For this purpose I make the following supposition. I have lived for some years near a ferry. It consists with my knowledge that the passage boat has a thousand times crossed the river, and as many times returned safe. An unknown man, whom I have just now met, tells me in a serious manner that it is lost; and affirms, that he himself, standing on the bank, was a spectator of the scene; that he saw the passengers carried down the stream and the boat overwhelmed. No person, who is influenced in his judgment of things, not by philosophical subtleties, but by common sense, a much surer guide, will hesitate to declare, that in such a testimony I have probable evidence of the fact asserted."—Dissertation on Miracles, 46-47.

phenomenon, that human beings are capable of falsehood and folly.

It is much to be regretted that Hume employed the word miracles in the title of this inquiry. He thus employed a term which had been applied to sacred subjects, and raised a natural prejudice against reasonings, applicable to contemporary events, and to the rules of ordinary historical belief. He might have found some other title—such as, "The Principles of Belief in Human Testimony," which would have more satisfactorily explained the nature of the inquiry.

But it is not improbable that the odium thus occasioned first introduced Hume's philosophical works to controversial notoriety. Though disappointed by the silence of the public immediately on his arrival from abroad, he has soon to tell us in his "own life,"—"Meanwhile, my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by reverends and right reverends came out two and three in a year;[1] and I found, by Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company."[2]

[1] Perhaps the earliest in date of these is, "An Essay on Mr. Hume's Essay on Miracles," by William Adams, M.A. chaplain to the Bishop of Llandaff, 1751.

[2] Warburton says to Hurd, on 28th September, 1749,—"I am strongly tempted to have a stroke at Hume in passing. He is the author of a little book called 'Philosophical Essays;' in one part of which he argues against the being of a God, and in another (very needlessly you will say,) against the possibility of miracles. He has crowned the liberty of the press: and yet he has a considerable post under the government. I have a great mind to do justice on his arguments against miracles, which I think might be done in a few words. But does he deserve notice? Is he known among you?

It was in the "Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding," that Hume promulgated the theory of association, which called forth so much admiration of its simplicity, beauty, and truth. "To me," he says, "there appear to be only three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, *Resemblance, Contiguity* in time or place, and *Cause* or *Effect.*

"That these principles serve to connect ideas, will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original [Resemblance.] The mention of one apartment in a building, naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others [Contiguity:] and if we think on a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it [Cause and Effect.]"[1]

In connexion with this theory a curious charge has been brought forward by Coleridge, who says, "In consulting the excellent commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas, on the Parva Naturalia of Aristotle, I was struck at once with its close resemblance to Hume's essay on association. The main thoughts were the same in both. The *order* of the thoughts was the same, and even the illustrations differed only by Hume's occasional substitution of more modern examples. I mentioned the circumstance to several of my literary acquaintances, who admitted the closeness of the resemblance, and that it seemed too great to be explained by mere coincidence; but they thought it improbable that Hume should have held the pages of the angelic doctor worth turning over. But some time after, Mr. Payne of the King's Mews, showed Sir James

Pray answer these questions. For if his own weight keeps him down, I should be sorry to contribute to his advancement to any place but the pillory." Letters from a late Rev. prelate to one of his friends, 1808, p. 11.

[1] Sect. iii.

Mackintosh some odd volumes of St. Thomas Aquinas, partly perhaps from having heard that Sir James, (then Mr. Mackintosh,) had in his lectures passed a high encomium on this canonized philosopher, but chiefly from the fact that the volumes had belonged to Mr. Hume, and had here and there marginal marks and notes of reference in his own handwriting. Among these volumes was that which contains the Parva Naturalia, in the old Latin version, swathed and swaddled in the commentary aforementioned."

On this, Sir James Macintosh says, that "the manuscript of a part of Aquinas, which I bought many years ago, (on the faith of a bookseller's catalogue,) as being written by Mr. Hume, was not a copy of the commentary on the *Parva Naturalia*, but of Aquinas's own *Secunda Secundæ;* and that, on examination, it proves not to be the handwriting of Mr. Hume, and to contain nothing written by him."[1] So much for the external evidence of plagiarism.

With regard to the internal evidence, the passage of Aquinas particularly referred to, which will be found below,[2] refers to memory not imagination; to the recall of images in the relation to each other in which they have once had a place in the mind, not to

[1] Preliminary Dissertation, Note T.

[2] "Quandoque remeniscitur aliquis incipiens ab aliqua re, cujus memoratur, a quâ procedit ad alium triplici ratione. Quandoque quidem ratione similitudinis, sicut quando aliquis memoratur de Socrate, et per hoc, occurrit ei Plato, qui est similis ei in sapientia; quandoque vero ratione contrarietatis, sicut si aliquis memoretur Hectoris, et per hoc occurrit ei Achilles. Quandoque vero ratione propinquitatis cujuscunque, sicut cum aliquis memor est patris, et per hoc occurrit ei filius. Et eadem ratio est de quacunque alia propinquitate, vel societatis, vel loci, vel temporis, et propter hoc fit reminiscentia quia motus horum se invicem consequuntur."—*Aquinatis Comment. in Aristot. de Memoria et Remeniscentia; edit. Paris*, 1660, p. 64. The scope of Aquinas' remarks have

the formation of new associations, or aggregates of ideas there; nor will it bring the theories to an identity, that, according to Hume's doctrine, nothing can be recalled in the mind unless its elements have already been deposited there in the form of ideas, because the observations of Aquinas apply altogether to the *reminiscence* of aggregate objects. But the classification is different: for Hume's embodies cause and effect, but not contrariety; while that of Aquinas has contrariety, but not cause and effect. In a division into three elements, this discrepancy is material; and, without entering on any lengthened reasoning, it may simply be observed, that the merit of Hume's classification is, that it is exhaustive, and neither contains any superfluous element, nor omits any principle under which an act of association can be classed.

But it is remarkable that Coleridge should have failed to keep in view, in his zeal to discover some curious thing to reward him for his researches among the fathers, that the classification is not that of Aquinas, but of Aristotle, and is contained in the very work on which the passage in Aquinas is one of the many commentaries.[1]

The "Essays Moral and Political," had, though it is

more reference to mnemonics or artificial memory than to association. They explain how a man, remembering what he did yesterday, may pass to the remembrance of what he did the day before, &c.

[1] See Dr. Brown's commentary on the history of theories of association, in his thirty-fourth Lecture. Sir William Hamilton, the highest living authority on these subjects, while he thinks that Aristotle has not got justice for the extent to which he has anticipated Hume and others in relation to this matter, does not think there is the slightest ground for the charge of plagiarism, and observes to me that Coleridge's own remarks on association are merely an adaptation from the German of Maas.

not mentioned by Hume in his "own life," been so well received, that a second edition appeared in 1742, the same year in which the second volume of the original edition was published. A third edition was published in London in 1748,[1] of which Hume, comparing them with his neglected contemporaneous publication of the Inquiry, says that they "met not with a much better reception."

Two essays, which had appeared in the previous editions, were omitted in the third. One of these, "Of Essay Writing," was evidently written at the time when the author had the design of publishing his work periodically,[2] and was meant as a prospectus or announcement to the readers, of the method in which he proposed to address them in his periodical papers. The other was a "Character of Sir Robert Walpole;" a curious attempt to take an impartial estimate of a man who, at the time of the first publication, had been longer in office, and was surrounded by a more numerous and powerful band of enemies, than any previous British statesman. But between the two publications the enemies had triumphed; and the statesman of forty years had been driven into retirement, where death speedily relieved him from a scene of inaction, which might have been repose to others, but was to him an insupportable solitude. Party rage had consequently changed its direction, and that air of solemn deliberation which, while the statesman was moving between the admiration of his friends and the hatred of his enemies, had an appearance of resolute stoical impartiality, might have appeared strained and affected, if the essay had been republished in 1748.

To this third edition three essays were added, "Of

[1] 8vo, printed for A. Millar. It is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* list for November.

[2] See p. 136.

National Characters," "Of the Original Contract," and "Of Passive Obedience." The first of these contains some very curious incidental notices of ancient morals and habits, so adapted to modern colloquial language and habits, as to make the descriptions as clear to the unlearned as to the learned; as, for example, the following notices of the drinking practices of the ancients:—

"The ancient Greeks, though born in a warm climate, seem to have been much addicted to the bottle; nor were their parties of pleasure any thing but matches of drinking among men, who passed their time altogether apart from the fair. Yet when Alexander led the Greeks into Persia, a still more southern climate, they multiplied their debauches of this kind, in imitation of the Persian manners.[1] So honourable was the character of a drunkard among the Persians, that Cyrus the younger, soliciting the sober Lacedemonians for succour against his brother Artaxerxes, claims it chiefly on account of his superior endowments, as more valorous, more bountiful, and a better drinker.[2] Darius Hystaspes made it be inscribed on his tomb-stone, among his other virtues and princely qualities, that no one could bear a greater quantity of liquor."

The other two essays, though bearing on subjects which have now almost dropped out of political discussion, "The Original Contract," and "Passive Obedience," trod close on the heels of the long conflict in which Milton, Salmasius, Hobbes, Sidney, Locke, and Filmer, had been partakers; and while the din of arms was far from being exhausted, they professed to hold the balance equally between the combatants, or,

[1] "*Babylonii maxime in vinum, et quæ ebrietatem sequuntur, effusi sunt.* Quint. Cur. lib. v. cap. 1.

[2] Plut. Symp. lib. i. quæst. 4.

more properly speaking, to examine philosophically the merits of the theory of each party, without taking up the angry arguments of either. They are, in truth, but a farther adaptation to politics of those utilitarian theories which Hume had previously applied both to private morals and to government. And the principle they promulgate is, that the citizen's allegiance to the laws and constitution of his country, has its proper foundation neither in an acknowledgment of the divine right of any governor, nor in a contract with him by which both parties are bound, but in the moral duty of respecting internal peace and order, and of avoiding outbreaks which may plunge the people into anarchy and misery, to gratify the pride or baser passions of turbulent individuals.

It must have been on his return on this occasion, that Hume rejoined the family circle at Ninewells, bereaved of the parent whose devotion to his training and education he has so affectionately commemorated. "I went down," he says, "in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country house, for my mother was now dead."[1] In a letter, which will have to be afterwards referred to, by Dr. Black, to Adam Smith, written when Hume was on his death-bed, and in relation to his final illness, there is the remark, "His mother," he says, "had precisely the same constitution with himself, and died of this very disorder."

On this subject, the American traveller, Silliman, gave currency to a foolish and improbable story, which he puts in the following shape :—

[1] From the circumstances to be immediately stated regarding this event, it seems to have taken place while Hume was on his way back from Turin. In a search in *The Scots Magazine*, and other quarters where one might expect to find mention of the decease of a person in the rank of the lady of Ninewells, I have not been able to ascertain the precise date.

"It seems that Hume received a religious education from his mother, and early in life was the subject of strong and hopeful religious impressions; but, as he approached manhood, they were effaced, and confirmed infidelity succeeded. Maternal partiality, however alarmed at first, came at length to look with less and less pain upon this declension, and filial love and reverence seem to have been absorbed in the pride of philosophical scepticism; for Hume now applied himself with unwearied, and unhappily with successful efforts, to sap the foundation of his mother's faith. Having succeeded in this dreadful work, he went abroad into foreign countries; and as he was returning, an express met him in London, with a letter from his mother, informing him that she was in a deep decline, and could not long survive: she said, she found herself without any support in her distress; that he had taken away that source of comfort, upon which, in all cases of affliction, she used to rely, and that now she found her mind sinking into despair. She did not doubt but her son would afford her some substitute for her religion; and she conjured him to hasten to her, or at least to send her a letter, containing such consolations as philosophy can afford to a dying mortal. Hume was overwhelmed with anguish on receiving this letter, and hastened to Scotland, travelling day and night; but before he arrived his mother expired. No permanent impression seems, however, to have been made on his mind by this most trying event; and whatever remorse he might have felt at the moment, he soon relapsed into his wonted obduracy of heart."

This story, probably told after dinner, and invented on the spot, — the American narrator's unfortunate name perhaps rendering him peculiarly liable to the

machinations of the mischievous,—is totally at variance with Hume's character. He was no propagandist; and, indeed, seems ever to have felt, that a firm faith in Christianity, unshaken by any doubts, was an invaluable privilege, of which it would be as much more cruel to deprive a fellow-creature than to rob him of his purse, as the one possession is more valuable than the other. Hence we shall find, that his conversation was acceptable to women and to clergymen, who never feared in his presence to encounter any sentiment that might shock their feelings; and what is more to the point, parents were never afraid of trusting their children to his care and social attentions, and indeed thought it a high privilege to obtain them.

The appearance of the above passage in a notice of "Silliman's Travels" in *The Quarterly Review*, called forth a remonstrance from Baron Hume, which elicited the following statement from the editor:—[1]

"That anecdote he has shown to be false by unquestionable dates, and by a circumstance related in the manuscript memoirs of the late Dr. Carlyle, an eminent clergyman of the Scottish Church, and friend of the historian. The circumstance, interesting in itself, and decisive on the subject, we transcribe, in the words of the manuscript, from the letter before us:—

"David and he (the Hon. Mr. Boyle, brother of the Earl of Glasgow) were both in London at the period when David's mother died. Mr. Boyle, hearing of it, soon after went into his apartment, for they lodged in the same house, where he found him in the deepest affliction, and in a flood of tears. After the usual topics of condolence, Mr. Boyle said to him, 'My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having

[1] Quarterly Review, xvi. 279.

thrown off the principles of religion; for if you had not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that the good lady, who was not only the best of mothers but the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the realms of the just.' To which David replied, 'Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet, in other things, I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine.'"[1]

One of Hume's most intimate friends was Dr. Clephane, a physician in considerable practice in London. They appear to have become acquainted with each

[1] There is a traditional anecdote, to the effect that Mrs. Hume, expressing her opinion of her son David and his accomplishments, said, "Our Davie's a fine good-natured crater, but uncommon wake-minded." I have heard this adduced as a proof of the philosopher's gentle, passive nature, and the effect it had in stamping an impression of his character on one not capable of appreciating his genius. But the anecdote is not characteristic of either party, and arises out of the common mistake that Hume was all his life tame, phlegmatic, and unimpassioned. However much he had tutored himself to stoicism, and had succeeded in conquering the outward demonstrations of strong feelings, it will be seen in various documents quoted in these volumes, and in the incidents narrated, that he was a man of strong impulses, full of blood and nerve, and that, as in a high-mettled horse, his energies were regulated, not extinguished. No one who had the training of his youth could have escaped observing in him the workings of strong aspirations, and of a hardy resolute temper.

But Mrs. Hume was evidently an accomplished woman, worthy of the sympathy and respect of her distinguished son, and could not have failed to see and to appreciate from its earliest dawnings the originality and power of his intellect. Her portrait, which I have seen, represents a thin but pleasing countenance, expressive of great intellectual acuteness. Some verses, which a lady, who is her direct descendant, authenticates as being in her handwriting, are in the curious collection of autographs and illustrated portraits, in the possession of Mr. W. F. Watson, Prince's Street, Edinburgh. It has been supposed that they are the composition of David Hume himself; but the use of the Scottish language almost amounts to evidence

other during the expedition to Port L'Orient, in which Clephane was probably a medical officer, as Hume, in his letters about his own half-pay, speaks of him as in the same position with himself. The correspondence is characterized by the thorough ease and polite familiarity of the camp, and none of Hume's letters

against that supposition: he would as readily have walked the streets of Edinburgh in a kilt. The lines are called "Song.—Air, Mary's Dream," and begin—

What now avails the flowery dream,
That animates my youthful mind,
My Mary's vows are all a whim,
Her plighted troth as light as wind.

O Mary, dearer than the day
That cheers the nighted wanderer's ee,
Through ance-loved scenes I lonely stray,
But lovely Mary's far frae me.

What now avails the beachen grove,
Or willow in its cloak o' gray,
Those scenes 'twas sacred ance to love,
Now fills my heart in grief and wae.

O Mary, &c.

Perhaps this may be as good an opportunity as any other for the insertion of some lines, carefully preserved in the MSS. R.S.E., which are at least so far to the present purpose, that they give a pleasing idea of the social circle at Ninewells. They are addressed to a lady who had lived to see her grandchildren; which does not appear to have been the case with the mother of the historian, as her eldest son was not married till 1751. A dowager of an elder generation may have lived for some time at Ninewells during David Hume's youth, though he does not mention her: or there may have been some collateral member of the family, to whom the lines may have been addressed; for, in a series of extracts which I have obtained from the Kirk Session Records of Chirnside, I find that a David Home *in* Ninewells, who cannot have been a lineal ancestor of the philosopher, had a numerous family baptized between 1691 and 1701. The lines are entitled "Miss A. B. to Mrs. H. by her Black Boy;" and however the genealogical questions we have just been considering, may stand, their intrinsic merit, as embodying a beautiful and humane sentiment, entitle them to notice.—Query, is it to this alone, or to some extrinsic interest

are fuller of his playful spirit than those addressed to his brother officer.

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"Ιητρὸς γὰρ ἀνὴρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων.[1]

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I have here received a great many thanks from an honest man, who tells me that he and all his family have been extremely obliged to me. This is my brother's gardener, who showed me a letter from his son, wherein he acknowledges that he owes his life to your care; that you placed him in an hospital, and attended him with as much assiduity as if he had been the best nobleman in the land; that all he shall ever be worth will never be able to repay you: and that therefore he must content himself with being grateful: at the same time desiring his father to give me thanks, by whose means he was recommended to you.

"These thanks I received with great gravity, and

attached to Miss A. B. that we are to attribute the careful preservation of the lines by Hume?

Condemn'd in infancy a slave to roam,
Far far from India's shore, my native home,
To serve a Caledonian maid I come—
In me no father does his darling mourn—
No mother weeps me from her bosom torn—
Both grew to dust, they say to earth below;
But who those were, alas, I ne'er shall know.
Lady, to thee her love my mistress sends,
And bids thy grandsons be Ferdnando's friends.
Bids thee suppose, on Afric's distant coast,
One of those lily-coloured favourites lost;
Doom'd in the train of some proud dame to wait,
A slave, as she should will, for use or state.
If to the boy you'd wish her to be kind,
Such grace from you let Ferdinando find.

[1] Hom. Il. λ. 515. A medical man is equal in value to many other men. Or, as Pope has it,

A wise physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,
Is more than armies to the public weal.

replied, that one must always endeavour to do good when it is in one's power. In short, I took upon me your part, and gave myself as many airs as if I had really shown the same beneficent dispositions. I considered that you have good deeds to spare, and are possessed of greater store of merits and works of supererogation, than any church, Pagan, Mahometan, or Catholic, ever was entitled to, and that, therefore, to rob you a little was no great crime:—

—— cui plura supersunt,
Et fallunt dominum, et prosunt furibus.[1]

"I hope, dear Doctor, you find virtue its own reward — that, methinks, is but just — considering it is the only reward it is ever likely to meet with—in this world I mean; at least you may take your own reward yourself for me. I shall never trouble my head about the matter, and you need not expect that I shall even like or esteem you the better for this instance of your charity and humanity. You fancy, I suppose, that I already liked and esteemed you so much, that this makes no sensible addition. You may fancy what you please: I shall not so much as speak another word upon this subject, but proceed to a better. You shall see.

"You would perhaps ask, how I employ my time in this leisure and solitude, and what are my occupations? Pray, do you expect I should convey to you an encyclopedia, in the compass of a letter? The last thing I took my hand from was a very learned, elaborate discourse, concerning the populousness of antiquity; not altogether in opposition to *Vossius* and *Montesquieu*, who exaggerate that affair infinitely;

[1] —— ubi non et multa supersunt,
Et dominum fallunt, et prosunt furibus.
Hor. epist. i. 6, 45.

but, starting some doubts, and scruples, and difficulties, sufficient to make us suspend our judgment on that head. Amongst other topics, it fell in my way to consider the greatness of ancient *Rome;* and in looking over the discourse, I find the following period. 'If we may judge by the younger Pliny's account of his house, and by the plans of ancient buildings in Dr. Mead's collection, the men of quality had very spacious palaces, and their buildings were like the Chinese houses, where each apartment is separate from the rest, and rises no higher than a single story.'[1] Pray, on what authority are those plans founded? If I remember right, I was told they were discovered on the walls of the baths, and other subterraneous buildings. Is this the proper method of citing them? If you have occasion to communicate this to Dr. Mead, I beg that my sincere respects may be joined.

"I think the parsons have lately used the physicians very ill, for, in all the common terrors of mankind, you used commonly both to come in for a share of the profit: but in this new fear of earthquakes, they have left you out entirely, and have pretended alone to give prescriptions to the multitude.[2] I remember,

[1] See this passage nearly verbatim in the "Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations," (Works, edit. 1826, p. 483.) Much light has of course been subsequently thrown on this matter by the investigations in Pompeii, and other places.

[2] London was kept in much excitement, during the year 1750, by repeated shocks of earthquake. Horace Walpole says, on 11th March, "In the night between Wednesday and Thursday last, (exactly a month since the first shock,) the earth had a shivering fit between one and two; but so slight that, if no more had followed, I don't believe it would have been noticed. I had been awake, and had scarce dosed again. On a sudden I felt my bolster lift up my head: I thought somebody was getting from under my bed, but soon found it was a strong earthquake, that lasted near

indeed, Mr. Addison talks of a quack that advertised pills for an earthquake, at a time when people lay under such terrors as they do at present. But I know not if any of the faculty have imitated him at this time. I see only a Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of London, where, indeed, he recommends certain pills, such as fasting, prayer, repentance, mortification, and other drugs, which are entirely to come from his own shop. And I think this is very unfair in him, and you have great reason to be offended; for why might he not have added, that medicinal powders and potions would also have done service? The worst is, that you dare not revenge yourself in kind, by advising your patients to have nothing to do with the parson; for you are sure he has a faster hold of them than you, and you may yourself be discharged on such an advice.[1]

half a minute, with a violent vibration and great roaring. I rang my bell; my servant came in, frightened out of his senses. In an instant we heard all the windows in the neighbourhood flung up. I got up, and found people running into the streets; but saw no mischief done. There has been some: two old houses flung down, several chimneys, and much china ware." — Letters to Sir H. Man, ii. 349.

"Dick Leveson and Mr. Rigby, who had supped and staid late at Bedford House, the other night, knocked at several doors, and in a watchman's voice cried, 'Past four o'clock, and a dreadful earthquake.'"—Ib. 354.

[1] "There has been a shower of sermons and exhortations. Secker, the jesuitical Bishop of Oxford, begun the mode. He heard the women were all going out of town to avoid the next shock: and so, for fear of losing his Easter offerings, he set himself to advise them to wait God's good pleasure, in fear and trembling. But, what is more astonishing, Sherlock, [Bishop of London,] who has much better sense, and much less of the popish confessor, has been running a race with him for the old ladies, and has written a Pastoral Letter, of which ten thousand were sold in two days, and fifty thousand have been subscribed for since the two first editions." — Ib. 353.

"You'll scarcely believe what I am going to tell you; but it is literally true. Millar had printed off, some months ago, a new edition of certain philosophical essays, but he tells me very gravely that he has delayed publishing because of the earthquakes.[1] I wish you may not also be a loser by the same common calamity; for I am told the ladies were so frightened, they took the rattling of every coach for an earthquake; and therefore would employ no physicians but from amongst the infantry: insomuch that some of you charioteers had not gained enough to pay the expenses of your vehicle. But this may only be waggery and banter, which I abhor. Please remember to give my respects to the General, and Sir Harry, and Captain Grant, who I hope are all in good health: indeed, as to the Captain, I do not know what to hope, or wish; for if he recover his health, he loses his shape, and must always remain in that perplexing dilemma. — Remember me also to Suncey Glassaugh,[2] and remember me yourself.

"*Ninewells, near Berwick, April* 18, 1750.

"P.S. — Pray, did Guidelianus[3] get his money, allowed him by the Pay-office? I suppose he is in Ireland, poor devil! so I give you no commission with regard to him.

[1] A second edition of the "Essays concerning Human Understanding," was published by Millar in 1751, with the author's name. One of these essays, which, in the first edition, had the title, "Of the Practical Consequences of Natural Religion," but, in the second, received a much less appropriate title, and one likely to make its tenor, as applicable to the reasonings of philosophers anterior to Christianity, be misunderstood. It was called, "Of a Particular Providence, and Future State."

[2] Colonel Abercromby. See above, p. 222.

[3] Colonel Edmonstoune.

"Pray, tell Glassaugh that I hope he has not suppressed the paper I sent him about the new year.[1] If he has, pray ask for a sight of it, for it is very witty. I contrived it one night that I could not sleep for the tortures of rheumatism; and you have heard of a great lady, who always put on blisters, when she wanted to be witty. 'Tis a receipt I recommend to you."[2]

The following letter to Oswald shows us that Hume was, at the time it was written, earnestly engaged in the preparation of the "Essays on Political Economy," which he published in 1752.

HUME *to* JAMES OSWALD *of Dunnikier.*

"DEAR SIR, — I confess I was a little displeased with you for neglecting me so long; but you have made ample compensation. This commerce, I find, is of advantage to both of us; to me, by the new lights you communicate, and to you, by giving you occasion to examine these subjects more accurately. I shall here deliver my opinion of your reasonings with the freedom which you desire.

"I never meant to say that money, in all countries which communicate, must necessarily be on a level, but on a level proportioned to their people, industry, and commodities. That is, where there is double people, &c. there will be double money, and so on; and that the only way of keeping or increasing money is, by keeping and increasing the people and industry; not by prohibitions of exporting money, or by taxes on commodities, the methods commonly thought of.

[1] Probably "The Bellman's Petition," mentioned p. 317.
[2] From the original at Kilravock.

I believe we differ little on this head. You allow, that if all the money in England were increased fourfold in one night, there would be a sudden rise of prices; but then, say you, the importation of foreign commodities would soon lower the prices. Here, then, is the flowing out of the money already begun. But, say you, a small part of this stock of money would suffice to buy foreign commodities, and lower the prices. I grant it would for one year, till the imported commodities be consumed. But must not the same thing be renewed next year? No, say you; the additional stock of money may, in this interval, so increase the people and industry, as to enable them to retain their money. Here I am extremely pleased with your reasoning. I agree with you, that the increase of money, if not too sudden, naturally increases people and industry, and by that means may retain itself; but if it do not produce such an increase, nothing will retain it except hoarding. Suppose twenty millions brought into Scotland; suppose that, by some fatality, we take no advantage of this to augment our industry or people, how much would remain in the quarter of a century? not a shilling more than we have at present. My expression in the Essay needs correction, which has occasioned you to mistake it.

"Your enumeration of the advantages of rich countries above poor, in point of trade, is very just and curious; but I cannot agree with you that, barring ill policy or accidents, the former might proceed gaining upon the latter for ever. The growth of every thing, both in art and nature, at last checks itself. The rich country would acquire and retain all the manufactures that require great stock or great skill; but the poor country would gain from it all the

simpler and more laborious. The manufactures of London, you know, are steel, lace, silk, books, coaches, watches, furniture, fashions; but the outlying provinces have the linen and woollen trade.

"The distance of China is a physical impediment to the communication, by reducing our commerce to a few commodities; and by heightening the price of these commodities, on account of the long voyage, the monopolies, and the taxes. A Chinese works for three-halfpence a-day, and is very industrious; were he as near us as France or Spain, every thing we used would be Chinese, till money and prices came to a level; that is, to such a level as is proportioned to the numbers of people, industry, and commodities of both countries.

"A part of our public funds serve in place of money; for our merchants, but still more our bankers, keep less cash by them when they have stock, because they can dispose of that upon any sudden demand. This is not the case with the French funds. The *rentes* of the Hotel de Ville are not transferable, but are most of them entailed in the families. At least, I know there is a great difference in this respect betwixt them and the *actions* of the Indian Company.

"That the industry and people of Spain, after the discovery of the West Indies, at first increased more than is commonly imagined, is a very curious fact; and I doubt not but you say so upon good authority, though I have not met with that observation in any author.

"Beside the bad effects of the paper credit in our colonies, as it was a cheat, it must also be allowed that it banished gold and silver, by supplying their place. On the whole, my intention in the Essay was to remove people's terrors, who are apt, from chimerical

calculations, to imagine they are losing their specie, though they can show in no instance that either their people or industry diminish; and also to expose the absurdity of guarding money otherwise than by watching over the people and their industry, and preserving or increasing them. To prohibit the exportation of money, or the importation of commodities, is mistaken policy; and I have the pleasure of seeing you agree with me.

"I have no more to say, but compliments; and therefore shall conclude. I am," &c.[1]

"*Ninewells, 1st November*, 1750."

"

In 1750 there was published in Edinburgh, an edition of Montesquieu's "Esprit des Loix; avec les dernieres corrections et illustrations de l'Auteur."[2] That Hume was instrumental to this publication, is shown by the letters addressed to him by Montesquieu between the years 1749 and 1753, printed in the appendix. It appears, that, as he there intimates, the author sent over a copy of his corrections and illustrations; but the work must have been partly printed before their arrival, for, in the advertisement to the reader, it is stated that a few of the earliest sheets, where the more important amendments occurred, had to be

[1] Memorials of Oswald, p. 65.

[2] Two vols. 8vo, Hamilton and Balfour. The productions of the Scottish press, in the middle period of last century, deserve to be looked back upon with respect; and the excellence of its matter at that time, will go far to balance its present fertility. It was not only as a vehicle of native genius, that it was respectable. Besides the eminent editions of the classics by the Ruddimans and the Foulises, it supplied handsome editions of celebrated foreign works; a sure indication that it was surrounded by a large class of well educated readers.

reprinted, while some minor alterations are supplied by a list of corrections.

Montesquieu's appreciation of some of Hume's ethical works will be read with interest. Hume appears to have made the first advances towards an intimacy; and the great Frenchman, then in his sixtieth year, seems to have hailed with satisfaction the appearance of a kindred spirit, and to have received his proffers with warm cordiality. This is the commencement of that intercourse with his eminent contemporaries in France, which we shall hereafter find to occupy a prominent feature in Hume's literary and social history.

At this period we find Hume taking much interest in the conduct of a certain James Fraser, in connexion with the Westminster election of 1749—one of the marked epochs in the parliamentary history of that renowned constituency. The candidates were Lord Trentham the eldest son of Earl Gower, and Sir George Vandeput, of whom the former was returned by the high bailiff. Sir George Vandeput was the "independent" candidate, representing the "English interest." Lord Trentham was a placeman, and was accused of a partiality for French interests. Though the Jacobites were ranged on the Vandeput side, Lord Trentham was by implication accused of having favoured the exiled family; as by one of the election placards issued on the occasion, the voters are desired to "ask Lord Trentham, who had his foot in the stirrup in the year 1715?" He was charged with having sacrificed his country or Jacobite principles for a place, and with being that most abhorred of all political characters, an ex-patriot, who has ratted to obtain office. Shortly before the election, a riotous attack had been made on a small French theatre, which had

become peculiarly unpopular by obtaining a licence, when some English establishments had been suppressed under Walpole's act. It appears that Lord Trentham had, with some others, endeavoured to preserve the friendless foreigners from the fury of the mob. So un-English an act, as this harbouring and protecting of foreign vagabonds, against the just indignation of true born Britons, was very successfully displayed as an overt act in favour of Popery, Jacobitism, and French ascendency; and the skilful manner in which it was improved, in the hand-bills, and pasquinades of the Vandeput party, shows that this department of the electioneering art was not then far from its present state of maturity.[1]

[1] The following placard is, in the circumstances, a master-stroke in its simplicity and ingenuity.

"AUX ELECTEURS TRÈS DIGNES DE WESTMINSTER.

"MESSIEURS,—Vos suffrages et interêts sont desirés pour Le Très Hon. mi Lord TRENTHAM, un VÉRITABLE Anglois.

"N. B.—L'on prie ses Amis de ses rendre a l'hôtel François dans le Marché au Foin."

The following acrostic is a specimen of the poetic lucubrations of the Vandeput party:—

"T ruant to thy promis'd trust;
R ebel daring where thou durst,
E ager to promote French strollers,
N one but poltroons are thy pollers.

T ribes of nose-led clerks and placemen,
H ackney voters, (bribes disgrace men,)
A ll forswear, through thick and thin,
M eanness theirs, but thine the sin."

This election gave birth to some incidents apparently trifling, which yet make a material figure in British history, from their connexion with the vindication of the privileges of the House of Commons. The Honourable Alexander Murray, brother of Lord Elibank, a gentleman who will probably be again called up in a future part of these pages, was charged along with Mr. Crowle, an attorney, and another person, with the use of "threatening and affronting expressions," by the high bailiff. They were brought

A pretty minute investigation has not enabled me to discover what precise conduct in connexion with this affair was important enough to elicit from Hume the elaborate joke against Fraser embodied in the following papers. He was evidently a medical man, but he does not appear in the list of those who attested Mr. Murray's health, or were appointed to visit him. He certainly acted on the Vandeput side, yet his name is nowhere mentioned, in connexion with it, in a pretty large collection of documents relating to this election, which I have had an opportunity of consulting.[1]

Fraser was evidently, like Clephane, one of the medical officers in General St. Clair's expedition, for, in a previous letter to Colonel Abercromby, Hume mentions him as an officer in the royal regiment.[2] He appears to have been a thorough Jacobite, for, in another

before the bar of the House, and after some discussion and inquiry, Crowle confessed, was submissive, received the usual reprimand on his knees, and wiped them when he rose, saying, it was "the dirtiest house he had ever been in." Murray denied the charge, and resisted the House, "smiled," as Walpole says, "when he was taxed with having called Lord Trentham and the high bailiff, rascals," and, finally, refused to kneel, saying, "Sir, I beg to be excused, I never kneel but to God." Then followed imprisonment, and embarrassing questions about the prisoner's health, which, sinking under his self-inflicted imprisonment, reproached those who could not turn back on the course they had taken; the whole being rendered more complex by the difficulty of finding a guiding rule in the precedents of the House, until parliament was adjourned; and he left Newgate in a triumphant procession, proclaiming the device of "Murray and Liberty."

[1] Viz. in a volume of broadsides and other documents, in the possession of James Maidment, Esq. of which the pieces in the preceding note are specimens. To show how such inquiries are beset by tantalizing coincidences, there are two James Frasers mentioned on the Trentham side, one of them having after his name on a printed list of voters, the significant MS. notandum, "Don't pay."

[2] P. 223.

letter, Hume speaks of him as one of the extreme persons whom his history will displease by its too great partiality to the Whigs. A very pleasing and natural description of his character is given by Hume, in a letter to Clephane, a little farther on.[1]

The following document was sent to Colonel Abercromby, along with the explanatory letters which immediately follow it.

> To the Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice Reason, and the Honourable the Judges Discretion, Prudence, Reserve, and Deliberation, the Petition of the Patients of Westminster, against James Fraser, Apothecary.

Most humbly showeth,

That your petitioners had put themselves and families under the direction and care of the said James Fraser, and had so continued for several years, to their great mutual benefit and emolument.

That many of your petitioners had, under his management, recovered from the most desperate and deplorable maladies, such as megrims, toothaches, cramps, stitches, vapours, crosses in love, &c. which wonderful success, after the blessing of God, they can ascribe to nothing but his consummate skill and capacity, since many of their neighbours, labouring

[1] A gentleman of the same name connected with the Lovat family, was for some time an apothecary in London, where he lived "the life of a genuine London bachelor;" he was a keen Jacobite, and died about 1760. *Note communicated by Captain Fraser, Knockie*, who also mentions another James Fraser, who was commissioner of the navy during the revolutionary war, and settled in London in 1781; but this appears to have been a person of a later generation than Hume's friend.

under the same distresses, died every day, by the mistakes of less learned apothecaries.

That there are many disconsolate widows among your petitioners, who believed themselves, and were believed by all their neighbours, to be dying of grief; but as soon as the said James Fraser applied lenitives, and proper topical medicines, they were observed to recover wonderfully.

That in all hypochondriacal cases he was sovereign, in so much that his very presence dispelled the malady, cheering the sight, exciting a gentle agitation of the muscles of the lungs and thorax, and thereby promoting expectoration, exhilaration, circulation, and digestion.

That your petitioners verily believe, that not many more have died from amongst them, under the administration of the said James Fraser, than actually die by the course of nature in places where physic is not at all known or practised; which will scarcely be credited in this sceptical and unbelieving age.

That all this harmony and good agreement betwixt your petitioners and the said James Fraser had lately been disturbed, to the great detriment of your petitioners and their once numerous families.

That the said James Fraser, associating himself with ——— Carey, surgeon, and William Guthrey, Esq. and other evil intentioned persons, not having the fear of God before their eyes, had given himself entirely up to the care of Dame PUBLIC, and had utterly neglected your petitioners.

That the lady above mentioned was of a most admirable CONSTITUTION, envied by all who had ever seen her or heard of her; and was only afflicted sometimes with vapours, and sometimes with a loose-

ness or flux, which not being of the bloody kind, those about her were rather pleased with it.

That notwithstanding this, the said James Fraser uses all diligence and art to persuade the said lady that she is in the most desperate case imaginable, and that nothing will recover her but a medicine he has prepared, being a composition of *pulvis pyrius*,[1] along with a decoction of northern steel, and an infusion of southern *aqua sacra* or holy water.

That the medicine, or rather poison, was at first wrapt up under a wafer marked Patriotism, but had since been attempted to be administrated without any cover or disguise.

That a dose of it had secretly been poured down the throat of the said Dame Public, while she was asleep, and had been attended with the most dismal symptoms, visibly heightening her vapours, and increasing her flux, and even producing some symptoms of the bloody kind; and had she not thrown it up with great violence, it had certainly proved fatal to her.

That the said James Fraser and his associates, now finding that the *Catholicon* does not agree with the constitution of the said Dame, prescribed to her large doses of *Phillipiacum*, *Cottontium*,[2] and *Vandeputiana*,[3] in order to alter her constitution, and prepare her body for the reception of the said Catholicon.

That he had even been pleased to see Lovitium[4] applied to her, though known to be a virulent caustic, and really no better than a *lapis infernalis*.

That while the medicines Goveriacum and Tren-

[1] Gunpowder.
[2] In allusion, probably, to Sir John Hynd Cotton.
[3] In allusion to Sir George Vandeput.
[4] In allusion, probably, to Fraser's own family.

tuntium[1] were very violent, resembling sublimate of *high flown* mercury, he also much approved of them, but since they were mollified by late operations, and made as innocent as mercurius dulcis, they were become his utter aversion.

That the said James Fraser, through his whole practice on the said Dame Public, entirely rejected all lenitives, soporifics, palliatives, &c. though approved of by the regular and graduate physicians, as Dr. Pelham, Dr. Fox, Dr. Pitt; and that he prescribed nothing but chemical salts and stimulating medicines, in which regimen none but quacks and empirics who had never taken their degrees will agree with him.

That your petitioners remember the story of an Irish servant to a physician, which seems fitted to the present purpose. The doctor bid Teague carry a potion to a patient, and tell him it was the most innocent in the world, and if it did him no good, could do him no harm. The footman obeys, but unluckily transposing a word, said, that if it did him no harm it could do him no good. And your petitioners are much afraid that the catholicon above mentioned is much of the same nature.

May it therefore please your worships to discharge the said James Fraser from any farther attendance on the said Dame Public, and to order him to return to the care and inspection of your petitioners and their families.

The following is entitled, "True letter to Colonel Abercromby, to be first read."

"DEAR COLONEL,— Endeavour to make Fraser

[1] Earl Gower, and his son Lord Trentham.

believe I am in earnest. If the thing takes, you may easily find somebody to personate Mr. Cockburn; and you may swear to the truth of the whole. To make it more probable, you may say that you suspect too much study has made me crazy; otherwise I had never thought of so foolish a thing.

"If there be any probability of succeeding, an advertisement, like that which is on the following page, may be put into any of the public papers—that is, if you think *que le jeu vaut la chandelle.*

"My compliments to Mrs. Abercromby. I hope some day to regain her good opinion. It shall be the great object of my ambition.

"Tell the Doctor I shall answer him sooner than he did me. He will assist you very well in any cheat or roguery: but do not attempt it, unless you think you can all be masters of your countenance. This is a note, not a letter. Yours sincerely.

"P.S. Read Fraser the letter, but do not put it into his hands; he will tear it. Show him first my other letter to you."

"ADVERTISEMENT. — Speedily will be published, price 1s. A letter to a certain turbulent Patriot in Westminster, from a friend in the country.

——— *Et* spargere voces
In vulgum ambiguas, et quærere conscius arma.— *Virgil.*"

The following is the letter which, in pursuance of the arrangements for completing this complicated joke, Colonel Abercromby was to read to Fraser. Its tone of mock heroic will at once be detected, and indeed, when the spilling of the last drop of blood, "or of ink," is with so much simplicity made an alternative, it may be presumed that James Fraser

was a very obtuse being, if he believed these protestations to be serious.

"DEAR SIR,—This will be delivered you by Mr William Cockburn, a friend of mine, who travels to London for the first time. I have taken the opportunity to send up by him a manuscript, which I intend to have printed. I have ordered him first to read it to you; but not to trust it out of his hands. You can scarce be surprised that I treat Mr. Fraser so roughly in it. No man, who loves his country, can be a friend to that gentleman, considering his late as well as former behaviour. For if I be rightly informed, his conduct shows no more the spirit of submission and tranquillity than that of prudence and discretion; and if he goes on at this rate, you yourself will be obliged to renounce all connexion and friendship with him.

"I have been ill of late; and am very low at present from the loss of blood which they have drawn from me. My friends would hinder me from reading; but my books and my pen are my only comfort and occupation; and while I am master of a drop of blood or of ink, I will joyfully spill it in the cause of my country. I am, Dear Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant."

"*Ninewells, Feb.* 16*th*, 1751."

In the following letter to Dr. Clephane, we find that the practical joke on James Fraser, which seems to have given a good deal of employment to the wits of a great philosopher, a learned physician, and a gallant colonel, is still a matter which Hume has very much at heart; while at the same time he seems to have been amusing himself with some other jocular

effusions. The letter presents us with his first commemoration of the poetical genius of his friend, John Home, though it gives no forecast of the zeal with which he subsequently advocated his countryman's claims to originality and high genius. The dramatic critic will probably feel an interest in the light thrown on Hume's appreciation of Shakspere by the manner in which his name is connected with that of Racine.

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Ninewells, near Berwick,*
18*th February*, 1751.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I will not pay you so bad a compliment as to say I was not angry with you for neglecting me so long; that would be to suppose I was indifferent whether I had any share in your memory or friendship. However, since there is nothing in it but the old vice of indolence,

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

Ed io anche sóno Pittore, as Correggio said; I am therefore resolved to forgive you, and to keep myself in a proper disposition for saying the Lord's prayer, whenever I shall find space enough for it.

"I must own I could not but think you excusable, even before you disarmed me by your submission and penitence; 'tis so common an artifice for provincials to hook on a correspondence with a Londoner, under pretext of friendship and regard, that a jealousy on that head is very pardonable in the latter. But I ought not to lie under that general suspicion; for the fashionable songs I cannot sing; the present or the expectant ministers I have no interest in; the old good books I have not yet all read or pondered sufficiently; and the current stories and *bon mots*, I would

not repeat if I knew them. You see, therefore, that if I were not concerned about Dr. Clephane, I never should desire to hear from him, and consequently that a line of his would be equally acceptable whether it comes from London or Crookhaven.

"I have executed your desire and the Colonel's as well as I could, but have not, I believe, succeeded so well as last year: the subject, indeed, was exhausted, and the patient may justly, I fear, be esteemed incurable. I leave you to manage the matter as you best can: but I beg of you to conduct it, so as not to make a quarrel betwixt Fraser and me; he is an honest, good-humoured, friendly, pleasant fellow, (though, it must be confessed, a little turbulent and impetuous,) and I should be sorry to disoblige him. The Colonel would be heartily bit, if by this or any other means Fraser should be cured of his politics and patriotism; all his friends would lose a great deal of diversion, and certainly would not like him near so well, if he were more cool and reasonable, and moderate, and prudent. But these are vices he is in no manner of danger of. Is it likely that reason will prevail against nature, habit, company, education, and prejudice? I leave you to judge.

"But since I am in the humour of displaying my wit, I must tell you that lately, at an idle hour, I wrote a sheet called the Bellman's Petition: wherein (if I be not partial, which I certainly am,) there was some good pleasantry and satire. The Printers in Edinburgh refused to print it, (a good sign, you'll say, of *my* prudence and discretion.) Mr. Mure, the member, has a copy of it; ask it of him if you meet with him, or bid the Colonel, who sees him every day at the house, ask it, and if you like it read it to the General, and then return it. I will not boast, for I have no

manner of vanity; but when I think of the present dulness of London, I cannot forbear exclaiming,

> Rome n'est pas dans Rome,
> C'est par tout où je suis.

A namesake of mine has wrote a Tragedy, which he expects to come on this winter.[1] I have not seen it, but some people commend it much. 'Tis very likely to meet with success, and not to deserve it, for the author tells me, he is a great admirer of Shakspere, and never read Racine.

"When I take a second perusal of your letter, I find you resemble the Papists, who deal much in penitence, but neglect extremely *les bonnes œuvres*. I asked you a question with regard to the plans of ancient buildings in Dr. Mead's collection.[2] Pray, are they authentic enough to be cited in a discourse of erudition and reasoning? have they never been published in any collection? and what are the proper terms in which I ought to cite them? I know you are a great proficient in the *virtu*, and consequently can resolve my doubts. This word I suppose you pretend to speak with an (e), which I own is an improvement: but admitting your orthography, you must naturally have a desire of doing a good-natured action, and instructing the ignorant.

"It appears to me that apothecaries bear the same relation to physicians, that priests do to philosophers; the ignorance of the former makes them positive, and dogmatical, and assuming, and enterprising, and pretending, and consequently much more taking with the people. Follow my example—let us not trouble ourselves about the matter; let the one stuff the beasts'

[1] Probably "Agis," which appears to have been written before "Douglas."

[2] See above, p. 298.

guts with antimony, and the other their heads with divinity, what is that to us? according to the Greek proverb, they are no more, but as εις την αμιδα ενουρουντες.

"You may tell me, indeed, that I mistake the matter quite; that it is not your kindness for the people, which makes you concerned, but something else. In short, that if self-interest were not in the case, they might take clysters, and physic, and ipecacuanha, till they were tired of them. Now, dear Doctor, this mercenary way of thinking I never could have suspected you of, and am heartily ashamed to find you of such a temper.

"If you answer this any time within the twelve months 'tis sufficient, and I promise not to answer you next at less than six months' interval; and so, as the Germans say, je me recomante a fos ponnes craces. Yours, &c."

The "Bellman's Petition," more than once alluded to in Hume's letters, is a little jeu d'esprit, to which he seems to have attributed far more than its due importance. The clergy and schoolmasters of Scotland were then appealing to the legislature for an increase of their incomes; and in this production, Hume, in a sort of parody on the representation of these reverend and learned bodies, shows that bell-ringers have the same, or even greater claims on the liberality of the public. It is perhaps a little too like the original, of which it professes to be a parody; and though it has some wit, is deficient in the bitter ridicule, which Swift would have thrown into such an effort. The following are some passages: —

"That as your petitioners serve in the quality of grave-diggers, the great use and necessity of their order, in every well regulated commonwealth, has

never yet been called in question by any reasoner; an advantage they possess above their brethren the reverend clergy.

"That their usefulness is as extensive as it is great, for even those who neglect religion or despise learning, must yet, some time or other, stand in need of the good offices of this grave and venerable order.

"That it seems impossible the landed gentry can oppose the interest of your petitioners; since, by securing so perfectly as they have hitherto done, the persons of the fathers and elder brothers of the foresaid gentry, your petitioners, next after the physicians, are the persons in the world, to whom the present proprietors of land are the most beholden.

"That, as your petitioners are but half ecclesiastics, it may be expected they will not be altogether unreasonable nor exorbitant in their demands.

"That the present poverty of your petitioners in this kingdom is a scandal to all religion; it being easy to prove, that a modern bellman is not more richly endowed than a primitive apostle, and consequently possesseth not the twentieth part of the revenues belonging to a presbyterian clergyman.

"That whatever freedom the profane scoffers, and free thinkers of the age, may use with our reverend brethren the clergy, the boldest of them tremble when they think of us; and that a simple reflection on us has reformed more lives than all the sermons in the world.

"That the instrumental music allotted to your petitioners, being the only music of that kind left in our truly reformed churches, is a necessary prelude to the vocal music of the schoolmaster and minister, and is by many esteemed equally significant and melodious.

"That your petitioners trust the honourable house will not despise them on account of the present meanness of their condition; for, having heard a learned man say that the cardinals, who are now princes, were once nothing but the parish curates of Rome, your petitioners, observing the same laudable measures to be now prosecuted, despair not of being, one day, on a level with the nobility and gentry of these realms."

The petition of which this is a specimen, is accompanied by a letter, signed "Zerubabel Macgilchrist, Bellman of Buckhaven;" who kindly says to the members of parliament he addresses, that the brother to whom is allotted "the comfortable task of doing you the last service in our power, shall do it so carefully, that you never shall find reason to complain of him."[1]

CHAPTER VIII.

1751—1752. Æt. 40—41.

Sir Gilbert Elliot—Hume's intimacy with him—Their Philosophical Correspondence—Dialogues on Natural Religion—Residence in Edinburgh—Jack's Land—Publication of the "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals"—The Utilitarian Theory—Attempt to obtain the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow—Competition with Burke—Publication of the "Political Discourses"—The foundation of Political Economy—French Translations.

Foremost in that body of accomplished gentlemen, whose friendship and companionship afforded to

[1] Printed sheet in the possession of James Maidment, Esq. "The Bellman's Petition," has been reprinted in a curious collection of scraps, called "A Scots Haggis," the editor of which does not however appear to have known that Hume was the author of this piece.

Hume so much pleasure and instruction, was Mr. afterwards Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto. A small portion of the letters, of which their correspondence consists, has already been embodied in philosophical literature;[1] and I have now, through the favour of the noble descendant of the person to whom they were addressed, an opportunity of presenting the reader with all those portions of Hume's letters to Sir Gilbert Elliot, now existing, which have any claim on public attention, whether as containing valuable philosophical speculations, or throwing light on the social habits and intercourse of the two distinguished correspondents.[2]

Sir Gilbert Elliot was the third baronet of the family of Minto, who bore the same Christian name.[3]

[1] Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind, and Preliminary Dissertation to the Encyclopædia Britannica.

[2] In the following pages these papers will be cited as the Minto MSS.

[3] His grandfather distinguished himself by his resolute and skilful defence of William Veitch, one of the nonconforming clergy, who suffered in the persecutions of the reign of Charles II. Elliot acting as the persecuted man's agent, made an appeal to the feelings of the English statesmen, on the barbarity of the measures of their Scots colleagues; and was so far successful, that the sentence of death pronounced against Veitch, was commuted to banishment. He thenceforth became, of course, a marked man, and an act of forfeiture passed against him in 1685, as an accessory in Argyle's rising. He afterwards obtained a remission of his sentence, and on 22d November, 1688, he was received as a member of the faculty of advocates. He was created a baronet in 1700, and on 25th July, 1705, was raised to the bench. (*Brunton and Haig's account of the Senators of the College of Justice.*) In Dr. M'Crie's curious "Memoirs of Mr. William Veitch," (p. 99) it is stated, that when the evil days were passed, and the condemned nonconformist was parish minister of Dumfries, he was occasionally visited by the judge, when the following conversation passed between them,— "Ah Willie, Willie, had it no' been for me, the pyets had been

He joined the Scottish bar, though he does not seem to have sought professional practice.

He was, for a considerable period, a member of Parliament, and among other offices held that of treasurer of the navy.[1] In lighter literature he is known as the author of some pretty pieces of poetry, among which, the popular song of "My Sheep I neglected," is well esteemed by the admirers of pastoral lyrics. His acquirements as a scholar and philosopher are amply attested by his correspondence with Hume.

HUME *to* GILBERT ELLIOT *of Minto.*

"*Ninewells, near Berwick, 10th February*, 1751.

"DEAR SIR,—About six weeks ago, I gave our friend, Jack Stuart, the trouble of delivering you a letter, and some papers enclosed, which I was desirous to submit to your criticism and examination. I say not this by way of compliment and ceremonial, but seriously and in good earnest: it is pretty usual for people to be pleased with their own performance, especially in the heat of composition; but I have scarcely wrote any thing more whimsical, or whose merit I am more diffident of.

"But, in sending in these papers, I am afraid that

pyken your pate on the Nether-bow Port;" to which the retort was, "Ah Gibbie, Gibbie, had it no' been for me, ye would ha'e been yet writing papers for a plack the page."

This Sir Gilbert's son, and the father of Hume's correspondent, was raised to the bench on 4th June, 1726, and became Lord Justice Clerk on 3d May, 1763. He died on 16th April, 1766.

[1] He was chosen member for the county of Selkirk in 1754, and 1762, and for Roxburghshire in 1765, 1768, and 1774. He succeeded to the baronetcy on his father's death in 1766. He was made a lord of the admiralty in 1756, treasurer of the chamber in 1762, keeper of the signet in Scotland in 1767, and treasurer of the navy in 1770. He died in 1777. *Collins' Peerage. Beatson's Parliamentary Register.*

I have not taken the best step towards conveying them to your hand. I should also have wrote you to ask for them, otherwise, perhaps, our friend may wear them out in his pocket, and forget the delivery of them: be so good, therefore, as to desire them from him, and having read them at your leisure, return them to him in a packet, and he will send them to me by the carrier. You would easily observe what I mentioned to you, that they had a reference to some other work, and were not complete in themselves: but, with this allowance, are they tolerable?"[1]

The paper to which the following letter refers, was published as an appendix to the "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals," to be shortly noticed, and was simply termed, "A Dialogue." It is, perhaps, more imaginative than any other of Hume's works, "The Epicurean" not excepted. It draws startling contrasts, by taking from ancient and modern times, two communities of men strikingly opposed to each other in habits, and describing those of the one in the social language of the other. In this manner, it gives an account of the vices of the Greeks, in the manner in which they would be described by a modern fashionable Englishman, seeking pleasure and companionship in Greece, as it was in the days of Alcibiades. This method of exhibiting national manners through the magnifying glass of national prejudices, has, in later times, been frequently adopted,[2] and, perhaps, owes its popularity to the success with which it was exhibited in Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes," and Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World."

[1] Minto MS.

[2] See as instances, Washington Irving's "Salmagundi," and Morier's "Hajji Baba."

GILBERT ELLIOT *of Minto, to* HUME.

February, 1751.

DEAR SIR, — I have read over your Dialogue, with all the application I am master of. Though I have never looked into any thing of your writing, which did not either entertain or instruct me; yet, I must freely own to you, that I have received from this last piece an additional satisfaction, and what indeed I have a thousand times wished for in some of your other performances. In the first part of this work, you have given full scope to the native bent of your genius. The ancients and moderns, how opposite soever in other respects, equally combine in favour of the most unbounded scepticism. Principles, customs, and manners, the most contradictory, all seemingly lead to the same end; and agreeably to your laudable practice, the poor reader is left in the most disconsolate state of doubt and uncertainty. When I had got thus far, what do you think were my sentiments? I will not be so candid as to tell you; but how agreeable was my surprise, when I found you had led me into this maze, with no other view, than to point out to me more clearly the direct road. Why can't you always write in this manner? Indulge yourself as much as you will in starting difficulties, and perplexing received opinions: but let us be convinced at length, that you have not less ability to establish true principles, than subtlety to detect false ones. This unphilosophical, or, if you will, this lazy disposition of mine, you are at liberty to treat as you think proper; yet am I no enemy to free inquiry, and I would gladly flatter myself, no slave to prejudice or authority. I admit also that there is no writing or talking of any subject that is of importance enough to become the object of reasoning, without having recourse to some degree of subtlety or refinement. The only question is, where to stop, — how far we can go, and why no farther. To this question I should be extremely happy to receive a satisfactory answer. I can't tell if I shall rightly express what I have just now in my mind: but I often imagine to myself, that I perceive within me a certain instinctive feeling, which shoves away at once all subtle refinements, and tells me with authority, that these air-built notions are inconsistent with life and experience, and, by consequence,

cannot be true or solid. From this I am led to think, that the speculative principles of our nature ought to go hand in hand with the practical ones; and, for my own part, when the former are so far pushed, as to leave the latter quite out of sight, I am always apt to suspect that we have transgressed our limits. If it should be asked—how far will these practical principles go? I can only answer, that the former difficulty will recur, unless it be found that there is something in the intellectual part of our nature, resembling the moral sentiment in the moral part of our nature, which determines this, as it were, instinctively. Very possibly I have wrote nonsense. However, this notion first occurred to me at London, in conversation with a man of some depth of thinking; and talking of it since to your friend H. Home, he seems to entertain some notions nearly of the same kind, and to have pushed them much farther.

This is but an idle digression, so I return to the Dialogue.

With regard to the composition in general, I have nothing to observe, as it appears to me to be conducted with the greatest propriety, and the artifice in the beginning occasions, I think, a very agreeable surprise. I don't know, if, in the account of the modern manners, you [had] an eye to Bruyere's introduction to his translation of Theophrastes.[1] If you had not, as he has a thought handled pretty much in that manner, perhaps looking into it might furnish some farther hints to embellish that part of your work."[2]

HUME *to* GILBERT ELLIOT *of Minto.*

"*Ninewells, 19th February*, 1751.

"DEAR SIR,—Your notion of correcting subtlety of sentiment, is certainly very just with regard to morals, which depend upon sentiment; and in politics and natural philosophy, whatever conclusion is contrary to certain matters of fact, must certainly be wrong,

[1] Discours sur Théophraste, where there are some bitter and just remarks on the Parisian manners of La Bruyere's day, as an appropriate introduction to the exhibition of the follies of the Athenians.

[2] Scroll, Minto MSS.

and there must some error lie somewhere in the argument, whether we be able to show it or not. But in metaphysics or theology, I cannot see how either of these plain and obvious standards of truth can have place. Nothing there can correct bad reasoning but good reasoning, and sophistry must be opposed by syllogisms. About seventy or eighty years ago, I observe, a principle like that which you advance prevailed very much in France among some philosophers and *beaux esprits*. The occasion of it was this: The famous Mons. Nicole of the Port Royal, in his *Perpétuité de la Foi*,[1] pushed the Protestants very hard upon the impossibility of the people's reaching a conviction of their religion by the way of private judgment; which required so many disquisitions, reasonings, researches, eruditions, impartiality, and penetration, as not one in a hundred even among men of education, is capable of. Mons. Claude and the Protestants answered him, not by solving his difficulties, (which seems impossible,) but by retorting them, (which is very easy.) They showed that to reach the way of authority which the Catholics insist on, as long a train of acute reasoning, and as great

1 "La Perpétuité de la Foi, de l' Eglise Catholique touchant L'Eucharistie," 3 vols. 4to, 1669-1676. A smaller work published by the same author in 1664, was called "La Petite Perpétuité." Its author, Pierre Nicole, one of the illustrious recluses of the Port Royal, was more efficient as a polemical supporter of the principles of his church, than as a practical administrator of its authority. An amusing story is told of his unguarded habits and absence of mind. A lady had brought under his notice, as her spiritual adviser, a matter of extreme delicacy, with which he felt it difficult to deal. Seeing approach at the moment Father Fouquet, whom he knew to have much judgment and experience in such matters, he cried out —"Ah, here comes a man who can solve the difficulty," and, running to meet him, told the whole case, loudly and energetically. The feelings of the fair penitent may be imagined.

erudition, was requisite, as would be sufficient for a Protestant. We must first prove all the truths of natural religion, the foundation of morals, the divine authority of the Scripture, the deference which it commands to the church, the tradition of the church, &c. The comparison of these controversial writings begot an idea in some, that it was neither by reasoning nor authority we learn our religion, but by sentiment: and certainly this were a very convenient way, and what a philosopher would be very well pleased to comply with, if he could distinguish sentiment from education. But to all appearance the sentiment of Stockholm, Geneva, Rome ancient and modern, Athens and Memphis, have the same characters; and no sensible man can implicitly assent to any of them, but from the general principle, that as the truth in these subjects is beyond human ca acity, and that as for one's own ease he must adopt some tenets, there is most satisfaction and convenience in holding to the Catholicism we have been first taught. Now this I have nothing to say against. I have only to observe, that such a conduct is founded on the most universal and determined scepticism, joined to a little indolence; for more curiosity and research gives a direct opposite turn from the same principles.

"I have amused myself lately with an essay or dissertation on the populousness of antiquity, which led me into many disquisitions concerning both the public and domestic life of the ancients. Having read over almost all the classics both Greek and Latin, since I formed that plan, I have extracted what served most to my purpose. But I have not a Strabo, and know not where to get one in this neighbourhood. He is an author I never read. I know your library—I mean the Advocates'—is scrupulous of lending classics; but

perhaps that difficulty may be got over. I should be much obliged to you, if you could procure me the loan of a copy, either in the original language or even in a good translation.

"The Greeks had military dances, particularly the Pyrrhicha; but these were not practised in their festivals nor amidst their jollity. Their way of dancing was very good for an indolent fellow; for commonly they rose not from their seats, but moved their arms and head in cadence. 'Tis difficult to imagine there could be much grace in that kind of dancing.

"I send you enclosed a little endeavour at drollery, against some people who care not much to be joked upon.[1] I have frequently had it in my intentions to write a supplement to Gulliver, containing the ridicule of priests. 'Twas certainly a pity that Swift was a parson; had he been a lawyer or physician, we had nevertheless been entertained at the expense of these professions: but priests are so jealous, that they cannot bear to be touched on that head, and for a plain reason, because they are conscious they are really ridiculous. That part of the Doctor's subject is so fertile, that a much inferior genius I am confident might succeed in it.

"Tell Jack Stuart, as soon as you see him, that I have sent you the copy, if he can make any thing of it. I intended to have had it printed, but I know not how — I find it will not do. If you like the thing, I wish you would contrive together some way of getting over the difficulties that have arisen, the most strangely in the world. I am, &c."[2]

Among the papers submitted to the inspection of

[1] Probably "The Bellman's Petition," mentioned above.

[2] Minto MSS.

Mr. Elliot, were the "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion," which were not published until after their author's death, but which the following letter shows to have been written before the year 1751. The manuscript of this work[1] is full of emendations and corrections; and while the sentiments appear to be substantially the same as when they were first set down, the alterations in the method of announcing them are a register of the improvements in their author's style, for a period apparently of twenty-seven years. Here at least he could not plead the excuse of youth and indiscretion. The work, penned in the full vigour of his faculties, comes to us with the sanction of his mature years, and his approval when he was within sight of the grave. Whatever sentiments, therefore, in this work, may be justly found to excite censure, carry with them a reproach from which their author's name cannot escape.

The Dialogues are written with a solemn simplicity of tone worthy of the character of the subject. The structure is in a great measure that of Cicero, though there appears not, as there generally does in the conversations professed to be recorded by the Roman moralist, any one mind completely predominating over the others. Of the interlocutors, Philo presents himself, at first as a materialist of the Spinoza school, who finds that the material world has within itself the principles of its own motion and development — the operating causes that produce its phenomena; while he denies that these phenomena exhibit an all perfect structure. He is not, however, a man of settled opinions, but rather a sceptical demolisher of other people's views; and we find him saying, "I must confess that

[1] In the MSS. R.S.E.

I am less cautious on the subject of natural religion than on any other; both because I know that I can never, on that head, corrupt the principles of any man of common sense; and because no one, I am confident, in whose eyes I appear a man of common sense, will ever mistake my intentions. You in particular, Cleanthes, with whom I live in unreserved intimacy, you are sensible, that notwithstanding the freedom of my conversation, and my love of singular arguments, no one has a deeper sense of religion impressed on his mind, or pays more profound adoration to the Divine Being, as he discovers himself to reason, in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice of nature."

Cleanthes, another speaker, has created a natural religion of his own — a system of Theism, in which, by induction from the beautiful order and mechanism of the world, he has reasoned himself into the belief of an all-wise and all-powerful Supreme Being. He holds, that "the most agreeable reflection which it is possible for human imagination to suggest, is that of genuine Theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a being perfectly good, wise, and powerful, who created us for happiness; and who, having implanted in us immeasurable desires of good, will prolong our existence to all eternity, and will transfer us into an infinite variety of scenes, in order to satisfy those desires, and render our felicity complete and durable." And, strangely enough, it is with this one that the author shows most sympathy, very nearly professing that the doctrine announced by Cleanthes is his own; while it will be found in his correspondence, that he admits his having designedly endeavoured to make the argument of that speaker the most attractive. This is another illustration of the inapplicability of perfectly abstract metaphysical disquisitions to

religious faith; for, if there is any system of religion that is incompatible with Hume's metaphysical opinions on ideas and impressions, it is a system that is, like this of Cleanthes, the workmanship of human reason. The third speaker, Demea, is a devoutly religious man, who, not venturing to create a system of belief for himself, sees in the order of the world such a merciful and wise dispensation of Divine Providence, as induces him to receive the whole revealed scheme of religion without questioning those parts of it which are beyond his comprehension, any more than he questions those of which the wisdom and goodness are immediately apparent.

The general scope and purport of the Dialogues are not unlike those of Voltaire's Jenni. In both, the argument on natural theology, illustrating the existence of a ruling mind from the general order and harmony of created things, is adduced, and is measured with its counterpart, the argument from the imperfection of earthly things, and the calamities and unhappiness of the beings standing at the head of the whole social order, mankind. But in the mere similarity of the argument the resemblance stops; no two performances can be more unlike each other in tone and spirit than the English sceptic's honest search after truth, and the French infidel's ribald sport with all that men love and revere. The contrast may be found not only in these individual men, but in the two classes of thinkers at the head of which they respectively stood. Hume represented the cautious conscientious inquiry, which has established many truths and gradually ameliorated social evils; the Frenchman directed that scornful, careless, and cruel sport with whatever is dear and important to humanity, which one day bowed to abso-

lute despotism, and the next destroyed the whole fabric of social order.[1]

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto.*

"*Ninewells, near Berwick,*
March 10, 1751.

"Dear Sir,—You would perceive by the sample I have given you, that I make Cleanthes the hero of the dialogue: whatever you can think of, to strengthen that side of the argument, will be most acceptable to

[1] The late Rev. Dr. Morehead of St. Paul's Chapel in Edinburgh, who was revered as a minister, and respected as a scholar and philosopher, published in 1830, "Dialogues on Natural and Revealed Religion," a pleasing continuation of the work we have just been considering, in which the speakers are made to approach a conclusion nearer to the reverend author's own opinions, than he found them to be when he had read to the end of Hume's little book. From a note by Dr. Morehead, I am tempted to extract the following passage: "Mr. Hume was conscious of his own power, probably while his countrymen were making him a theme of their uncouth derision; and he seems to have had a prescience that he had not yet gathered all his fame. . . . . I am much mistaken if the name of this profound thinker does not yet receive the encomiastic epithets of a *grateful* posterity; and if, when his errors have passed away, he does not yet come to be regarded as the philosopher who has made the most penetrating and successful researches in the intricate science of human nature. He is a cool anatomist, who has dissected it throughout every fibre and nerve; and he may be partly pardoned, perhaps, if, in this sort of remorseless operation, he has too much lost sight of the principle of its moral and intellectual life." The Dialogues on Natural Religion seem to have taken a firm hold of Dr. Morehead's mind. He left behind him a farther continuation, called "Philosophical Dialogues," in which he beautifully represented the Philo of the original, revising his old opinions amidst such a serene old age, as the writer was then himself enjoying. This little work was published after its author's death, by a distinguished surviving friend, who has probably done more towards the propagation of Christian philosophy, than any other living writer of the English language.

me. Any propensity you imagine I have to the other side, crept in upon me against my will; and 'tis not long ago that I burned an old manuscript book, wrote before I was twenty, which contained, page after page, the gradual progress of my thoughts on that head. It began with an anxious search after arguments, to confirm the common opinion; doubts stole in, dissipated, returned; were again dissipated, returned again; and it was a perpetual struggle of a restless imagination against inclination, perhaps against reason.

"I have often thought, that the best way of composing a diulogue, would be for two persons that are of different opinions about any question of importance, to write alternately the different parts of the discourse, and reply to each other: by this means, that vulgar error would be avoided, of putting nothing but nonsense into the mouth of the adversary; and at the same time, a variety of character and genius being upheld, would make the whole look more natural and unaffected. Had it been my good fortune to live near you, I should have taken on me the character of Philo, in the dialogue, which you'll own I could have supported naturally enough; and you would not have been averse to that of Cleanthes. I believe, too, we could both of us have kept our tempers very well; only, you have not reached an absolute philosophical indifference on these points. What danger can ever come from ingenious reasoning and inquiry? The worst speculative sceptic ever I knew, was a much better man than the best superstitious devotee and bigot. I must inform you, too, that this was the way of thinking of the ancients on this subject. If a man made a profession of philosophy, whatever his sect was, they always expected to find more regularity

in his life and manners, than in those of the ignorant and illiterate. There is a remarkable passage of Appian to this purpose. That historian observes, that notwithstanding the established prepossession in favour of learning, yet some philosophers, who have been trusted with absolute power, have very much abused it; and he instances Critias, the most violent of the thirty, and Ariston, who governed Athens in the time of Sylla: but I find, upon inquiry, that Critias was a professed Atheist, and Ariston an Epicurean, which is little or nothing different. And yet Appian wonders at their corruption, as much as if they had been Stoics or Platonists. A modern zealot would have thought that corruption unavoidable.

"I could wish Cleanthes' argument could be so analyzed, as to be rendered quite formal and regular. The propensity of the mind towards it,—unless that propensity were as strong and universal as that to believe in our senses and experience,—will still, I am afraid, be esteemed a suspicious foundation. 'Tis here I wish for your assistance; we must endeavour to prove that this propensity is somewhat different from our inclination to find our own figures in the clouds, our faces in the moon, our passions and sentiments even in inanimate matter. Such an inclination may, and ought to be controlled, and can never be a legitimate ground of assent.

"The instances I have chosen for Cleanthes are, I hope, tolerably happy, and the confusion in which I represent the sceptic seems natural, but — si quid novisti rectius, &c.

"You ask me, '*If the idea of cause and effect is nothing but vicinity*, (you should have said constant vicinity, or, regular conjunction,) I should be glad to know *whence is that farther idea of causation against*

which you argue? This question is pertinent, but I hope I have answered it; we feel, after the constant conjunction, an easy transition from one idea to the other, or a connexion in the imagination; and as it is usual for us to transfer our own feelings to the objects on which they are dependent, we attach the internal sentiment to the external objects. If no single instances of cause and effect appear to have any connexion, but only repeated similar ones, you will find yourself obliged to have recourse to this theory.

"I am sorry our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read, and composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, Politics, and Literature have employed all my time; but still the other topics I must think more curious, important, entertaining, and useful, than any geometry that is deeper than Euclid. If in order to answer the doubts started, new principles of philosophy must be laid, are not these doubts themselves very useful? Are they not preferable to blind, and ignorant assent? I hope I can answer my own doubts; but if I could not, is it to be wondered at? To give myself airs, and speak magnificently, might I not observe, that Columbus did not conquer empires and plant colonies?

"If I have not unravelled the knot so well, in those last papers I sent you, as perhaps I did in the former, it has not, I assure you, proceeded from want of good will; but some subjects are easier than others: at some times one is happier in his researches and inquiries than at others. Still I have recourse to the *si quid novisti rectius;* not in order to pay you a compliment, but from a real philosophical doubt and curiosity.[1]

[1] Down to this point, the letter is printed in Dugald Stewart's Preliminary Dissertation to The Encyclopædia Britannica, Note ccc.

"I do not pay compliments, because I do not desire them. For this reason, I am very well pleased you speak so coldly of my petition. I had, however, given orders to have it printed, which perhaps may be executed, though I believe I had better have let it alone; not because it will give you offence, but because it will give no entertainment; not because it may be called profane, but because it may perhaps be deservedly called dull. To tell the truth, I was always so indifferent about fortune, and especially now, that I am more advanced in life, and am a little more at my ease, suited to my extreme frugality, that I neither fear nor hope any thing from man; and am very indifferent either about offence or favour. Not only, I would not sacrifice truth and reason to political views, but scarce even a jest. You may tell me, I ought to have reversed the order of these points, and put the jest first: as it is usual for people to be the fondest of their performances on subjects on which they are least made to excel, and that, consequently, I would give more to be thought a good droll, than to have the praises of erudition, and subtilty, and invention.—This malicious insinuation, I will give no answer to, but proceed with my subject.

"I find, however, I have no more to say on it, but to thank you for *Strabo*. If the carrier who will deliver this to you do not find you at home, you will please send the book to his quarters; his name is Thomas Henderson, the Berwick carrier; he leaves town on the Thursdays, about the middle of the day; he puts up at James Henderson, stabler, betwixt the foot of Cant's Close and Blackfriar's Wynd. After you have done with these papers, please return them by the same carrier; but there is no hurry; on the contrary the longer you keep them, I shall still believe you

are thinking the more seriously to execute what I desire of you. I am, dear Sir,

"Yours most sincerely."

"P.S. — If you'll be persuaded to assist me with Cleanthes, I fancy you need not take matters any higher than part 3d. He allows, indeed, in part 2d, that all our inference is founded on the similitude of the works of nature to the usual effects of mind, otherwise they must appear a mere chaos. The only difficulty is, why the other assimilations do not weaken the argument; and indeed it would seem from experience and feeling, that they do not weaken it so much as we might naturally expect. A theory to solve this would be very acceptable."[1]

HUME *to* GILBERT ELLIOT *of Minto.*

1751.

"DEAR SIR,—I am sorry your keeping these papers has proceeded from business and avocations, and not from your endeavours to clear up so difficult an argument. I despair not, however, of getting some assistance from you; the subject is surely of the greatest

[1] Minto MSS. In this collection there is a scroll of a letter written by Mr. Elliot to Hume, returning the manuscripts to which the correspondence refers. It has been published in the notes (ccc,) to Dugald Stewart's Preliminary Dissertation. It is not only a criticism of the Dialogues on Natural Religion, but an examination of Hume's general theory of impressions and ideas, worthy of the perusal of all who take interest in these inquiries. It is of considerable length, and the temptation to print it along with Hume's letter, was only overcome by the circumstance that it is to be found in a work widely circulated, and that the disposable space in this book may be more economically devoted to some letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot which are not to be found elsewhere.

importance, and the views of it so new as to challenge some attention.

"I believe the Philosophical Essays contain every thing of consequence relating to the understanding, which you would meet with in the Treatise; and I give you my advice against reading the latter. By shortening and simplifying the questions, I really render them much more complete. *Addo dum minuo.* The philosophical principles are the same in both; but I was carried away by the heat of youth and invention to publish too precipitately.—So vast an undertaking, planned before I was one-and-twenty, and composed before twenty-five, must necessarily be very defective. I have repented my haste a hundred, and a hundred times.

"I return Strabo, whom I have found very judicious and useful. I give you a great many thanks for your trouble. I am," &c.

Hume's elder brother, John, the laird of Ninewells, was married in 1751; and the following letter, enlivened by touches of light and even elegant raillery, scarcely excelled in the writings of Addison, evidently refers to that event. The plan of life which he sets forth was afterwards altered, at least in so far as he had then in view a place of residence.

HUME *to* MRS. DYSART.[1]

"*Ninewells, March 19th*, 1751.

"DEAR MADAM,—Our friend at last plucked up a resolution, and has ventured on that dangerous encounter. He went off on Monday morning; and this is the first action of his life wherein he has engaged

[1] Mrs. Dysart of Eccles, "a much valued relation of Hume," according to Mackenzie's Account of the Life of Home, p. 104.

himself, without being able to compute exactly the consequences. But what arithmetic will serve to fix the proportion between good and bad wives, and rate the different classes of each? Sir Isaac Newton himself, who could measure the course of the planets, and weigh the earth as in a pair of scales,—even he had not algebra enough to reduce that amiable part of our species to a just equation; and they are the only heavenly bodies whose orbits are as yet uncertain.

"If you think yourself too grave a matron to have this florid part of the speech addressed to you, pray lend it to the Collector, and he will send it to Miss Nancy.

"Since my brother's departure, Katty and I have been computing in our turn, and the result of our deliberation is, that we are to take up house in Berwick; where, if arithmetic and frugality don't deceive us, (and they are pretty certain arts) we shall be able, after providing for hunger, warmth, and cleanliness, to keep a stock in reserve, which we may afterwards turn either to the purposes of hoarding, luxury, or charity. But I have declared beforehand against the first; I can easily guess which of the other two you and Mr. Dysart will be most favourable to. But we reject your judgment; for nothing blinds one so much as inveterate habits.

"My compliments to his Solicitorship.[1] Unfortunately I have not a horse at present to carry my fat carcass, to pay its respects to his superior obesity. But if he finds travelling requisite either for his health or the captain's, we shall be glad to entertain him here, as long as we can do it at another's expense; in hopes we shall soon be able to do it at our own.

[1] Alexander Home, Solicitor-general for Scotland.—*Mackenzie.*

"Pray tell the Solicitor that I have been reading lately, in an old author called *Strabo*, that in some cities of ancient Gaul, there was a fixed legal standard established for corpulency; and that the senate kept a measure, beyond which, if any belly presumed to increase, the proprietor of that belly was obliged to pay a fine to the public, proportionable to its rotundity. Ill would it fare with his worship and I,[1] if such a law should pass our parliament; for I am afraid we are already got beyond the statute.

"I wonder, indeed, no harpy of the treasury has ever thought of this method of raising money. Taxes on luxury are always most approved of; and no one will say, that the carrying about a portly belly is of any use or necessity. 'Tis a mere superfluous ornament; and is a proof, too, that its proprietor enjoys greater plenty than he puts to a good use; and, therefore, 'tis fit to reduce him to a level with his fellow-subjects, by taxes and impositions.

"As the lean people are the most active, unquiet, and ambitious, they every where govern the world, and may certainly oppress their antagonists whenever they please. Heaven forbid that Whig and Tory should ever be abolished; for then the nation might be split into fat and lean; and our faction, I am afraid, would be in piteous taking. The only comfort is, if they oppressed us very much, we should at last change sides with them.

"Besides, who knows if a tax were imposed on fatness, but some jealous divine might pretend that the church was in danger.

"I cannot but bless the memory of Julius Cæsar, for the great esteem he expressed for fat men, and his aversion to lean ones. All the world allows, that

[1] Sic.

that emperor was the greatest genius that ever was, and the greatest judge of mankind.

"But I should ask your pardon, dear madam, for this long dissertation on fatness and leanness, in which you are no way concerned; for you are neither fat nor lean, and may indeed be denominated an arrant trimmer. But this letter may all be read to the Solicitor; for it contains nothing that need be a secret to him. On the contrary, I hope he will profit by the example; and, were I near him, I should endeavour to prove as good an encourager as in this other instance. What can the man be afraid of? The Mayor of London had more courage, who defied the hare.[1]

"But I am resolved some time to conclude, by putting a grave epilogue to a farce, and telling you a real serious truth, that I am, with great esteem, dear madam, your most obedient humble servant.[2]

"P.S. Pray let the Solicitor tell Frank, that he is a bad correspondent — the only way in which he can be a bad one, by his silence."

We find, through the whole of his acts and written thoughts before his return from the embassy to Turin, the indications of an earnest wish to possess the means of independent livelihood, suitable to one belonging to the middle classes of life. Great wealth or ornamental rank he seems never to have desired: but the circumstance of his having, in the year 1748, achieved the means of independence through his official emoluments, seems to have taken so strong a hold of his mind, that nearly thirty years afterwards,

[1] In allusion to that mayor who, on his first introduction to field sports, hearing a cry that the hare was coming, exclaimed, in a fit of magnanimous courage, "Let him come, in God's name; I fear him not!"

[2] Mackenzie's Home, p. 104. The original is in the MSS. R.S.E.

in writing his autobiography, he speaks with exultation of his having been then in possession of £1000. The position of the man in comfortable circumstances, equally removed from the dread of want, and the uneasy pressure of superfluous wealth, appears always to have presented itself as the most desirable fate which, in mere pecuniary matters, fortune could have in store for him; and no commentary on the sacred text has perhaps better illustrated its application to the conduct and feelings of mankind, than his adaptation of Agur's prayer to the middle station in life, at a time when he was far from having realized that happy mediocrity of fortune, of which he gives so pleasing a picture.

Agur's prayer is sufficiently noted—"Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."—The middle station is here justly recommended, as affording the fullest security for virtue; and I may also add, that it gives opportunity for the most ample exercise of it, and furnishes employment for every good quality which we can possibly be possessed of. Those who are placed among the lower ranks of men, have little opportunity of exerting any other virtue besides those of patience, resignation, industry, and integrity. Those who are advanced into the higher stations, have full employment for their generosity, humanity, affability, and charity. When a man lies betwixt these two extremes, he can exert the former virtues towards his superiors, and the latter towards his inferiors. Every moral quality which the human soul is susceptible of, may have its turn, and be called up to action; and a man may, after this manner, be much more certain of his progress in virtue, than where his good qualities lie dormant, and without employment.[1]

[1] Essays Moral and Political, published in 1741.

The following letter, of a somewhat later date, gives a view of his definitive intentions.

HUME *to* MICHAEL RAMSAY.

"*Ninewells, 22d June*, 1751.

"DEAR MICHAEL,—I cannot sufficiently express my sense of your kind letter. The concern you take in your friends is so warm, even after so long absence, and such frequent interruptions as our commerce has unhappily met with of late years, that the most recent familiarity of others can seldom equal it. I might perhaps pretend, as well as others, to complain of fortune; but I do not, and should condemn myself as unreasonable if I did. While interest remains as at present, I have £50 a-year, a hundred pounds worth of books, great store of linens and fine clothes, and near £100 in my pocket; along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabating love of study. In these circumstances I must esteem myself one of the happy and fortunate; and so far from being willing to draw my ticket over again in the lottery of life, there are very few prizes with which I would make an exchange. After some deliberation, I am resolved to settle in Edinburgh, and hope I shall be able with these revenues to say with Horace—

> Est bona librorum et provisae frugis in annum
> Copia.

Besides other reasons which determine me to this resolution, I would not go too far away from my sister, who thinks she will soon follow me; and in that case, we shall probably take up house either in Edinburgh, or the neighbourhood. Our sister-in-law behaves well, and seems very desirous we should both stay. . . . . .

And as she (my sister) can join £30 a-year to my stock, and brings an equal love of order and frugality, we doubt not to make our revenues answer. Dr. Clephane, who has taken up house, is so kind as to offer me a room in it; and two friends in Edinburgh have made me the same offer. But having nothing to ask or solicit at London, I would not remove to so expensive a place; and am resolved to keep clear of all obligations and dependencies, even on those I love the most." [1]

In fulfilment of the design thus announced, he tells us, in his "own life," "In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters." We find, from the dating of his letters, that Hume's residence in Edinburgh was for a year or two in "Riddell's Land," and that it was afterwards in "Jack's Land." Since the plan of numbering the houses in each street extended to the Scottish capital, these names have no longer been in general use; but I find that the former applied to an edifice in the Lawnmarket, near the head of the West Bow, and that the latter was a tenement in the Canongate, right opposite to a house in which Smollet occasionally resided with his sister. The term "Land" applied to one of those edifices—some of them ten or twelve stories high,—in which the citizens of Edinburgh, pressed upwards as it were by the increase of the population within a narrow circuit of walls, made stair-cases supply the place of streets, and erected perpendicular thoroughfares. A single floor of one of these edifices was, a century ago, sufficient to accommodate the family of a

[1] From a copy transmitted by Ramsay's nephew to Baron Hume, in the MSS. R.S.E. The blank denoted above is in the copy.

Scottish nobleman; and we may be certain, that a very small "Flat" would suit the economical establishment of Hume.

In 1751, appeared the "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals,"[1] the full development, so far as it was made by Hume, of the utilitarian system. The leading principle kept in view throughout this work, is, that its tendency to be useful to mankind at large, is the proper criterion of the propriety of any action, or the justness of any ethical opinion. In this spirit he examines many of the social virtues, and shows that it is their usefulness to mankind that gives them a claim to sympathy, and a title to be included in the list of virtues. The defects of this exposition of the utilitarian system, are marked by the manner in which it was critically attacked. In 1753 a controversial examination of it was made, with temper and ability, by James Balfour of Pilrig,[2] who in 1754 succeeded

[1] London: 8vo, printed for A. Millar. It is in the book list of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for December.

[2] "A Delineation of the Nature and Obligation of Morality, with Reflections upon Mr. Hume's book, entitled an 'Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.'"

On the publication of this book, Hume wrote the following letter, addressed "To the Author of the Delineation of the Nature and Obligations of Morality," and left it with the bookseller.

"Sir, — When I write you, I know not to whom I am addressing myself: I only know he is one who has done me a great deal of honour, and to whose civilities I am obliged. If we be strangers, I beg we may be acquainted, as soon as you think proper to discover yourself: if we be acquainted already, I beg we may be friends: if friends, I beg we may be more so. Our connexion with each other as men of letters, is greater than our difference as adhering to different sects or systems. Let us revive the happy times, when Atticus and Cassius the epicureans, Cicero the academic, and Brutus the stoic, could all of them live in unreserved friendship together, and were insensible to all those distinctions, except so far as they furnished agreeable matter to discourse and

to the chair, in the university of Edinburgh, which Hume had been desirous of filling.[1] Mr. Balfour's great argument is the universality of the admission by

conversation. Perhaps you are a young man, and being full of those sublime ideas, which you have so well expressed, think there can be no virtue upon a more confined system. I am not an old one; but, being of a cool temperament, have always found, that more simple views were sufficient to make me act in a reasonable manner; νηθε, και μεμνησο απιστειν; in this faith have I lived, and hope to die.

"Your civilities to me so much overbalance your severities, that I should be ungrateful to take notice of some expressions which, in the heat of composition, have dropped from your pen. I must only complain of you a little for ascribing to me the sentiments, which I have put into the mouth of the Sceptic in the "Dialogue." I have surely endeavoured to refute the sceptic, with all the force of which I am master; and my refutation must be allowed sincere, because drawn from the capital principles of my system. But you impute to me both the sentiments of the sceptic, and the sentiments of his antagonist, which I can never admit of. In every dialogue no more than one person can be supposed to represent the author.

"Your severity on one head, that of chastity, is so great, and I am so little conscious of having given any just occasion to it, that it has afforded me a hint to form a conjecture, perhaps ill-grounded, concerning your person.

"I hope to steal a little leisure from my other occupations, in order to defend my philosophy against your attacks. If I have occasion to give a new edition of the work, which you have honoured with an answer, I shall make great advantage of your remarks, and hope to obviate some of your criticisms.

"Your style is elegant, and full of agreeable imagery. In some few places it does not fully come up to my ideas of purity and correctness. I suppose mine falls still further short of your ideas, In this respect, we may certainly be of use to each other. With regard to our philosophical systems, I suppose we are both so fixed, that there is no hope of any conversions betwixt us; and for my part, I doubt not but we shall both do as well to remain as we are.

"I am, &c.

"*Edinburgh, March* 15, 1753."

[1] It is stated in Ritchie's "Account of the Life and Writings of Hume," from which the above letter is taken, and in some works of

mankind, in some shape or other, of the leading cardinal virtues, and the unhesitating adoption and practice of them by men on whom the utilitarian theory never dawned, and who are unconscious that their isolated acts are the fulfilment of any general or uniform law. Mr. Balfour argued that we must thus look to something else than utility, as the criterion of moral right and wrong. But a supporter of the utilitarian system, as it has been more fully developed in later days, would probably only take from Mr. Balfour's argument a hint to enlarge the scope of Hume's investigations. To the inquiry, how far utility is the proper end of human conduct, he would add the inquiry, how far the theory has been practically adopted by mankind at large. Though Bacon first laid down the broad rule of unvarying induction from experiment, many experiments were made, and many inductions derived from them, before he saw the light; and so before the utilitarian theory was first formally suggested—as it appears to have been by Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics — utility may frequently have been a rule of action.

It does not necessarily follow, that because a practice is universal, because it is adopted "by saint, by savage, and by sage," it is therefore not the dictate of utility, provided it be admitted that utility was an influencing motive with men before the days of Hume. The followers of established customs may often be blind; but if we hunt back a practice to its first institution, we may find that the leaders were quick-sighted, and kept utility in view, so far as the state of things they had to deal with permitted. A minute

reference, which appear to have depended on the authority of that book, that Hume was a competitor with Balfour for the chair. This statement has probably arisen out of some misapprehension as to his previous competition for the chair.

inquiry into national prejudices and customs frequently surprises the speculative philosopher, by developing these practices and opinions of the vulgar and illiterate, as the fruit of great knowledge and forethought. Exhibiting, in their full extravagance, the contrasts between different codes of morality, was one of Hume's literary recreations; and it might have been worth his while to have inquired, had it occurred to him, how much of his own favourite utilitarian principle is common to all, or at least to many, of the systems he has thus contrasted with each other.

It was a consequence, perhaps, of the limited extent to which he had carried the utilitarian theory, that Hume was charged with having left no distinct line between talent and virtue. By making it seem as if he held that each man was virtuous according as he did good to mankind at large, and vicious in as far as he failed in accomplishing this end, he made way for the argument, that no man can rise high in virtue, unless he also rise high in intellectual gifts; since, without possessing the latter, he is not capable of deciding what actions are, and what are not, conducive to the good of the human race. Many sentiments expressed in the Inquiry appeared to justify this charge.[1] There was thus no merit assigned to what is called good intention; and no ground for extending the just approbation of mankind to those who have never attempted to frame a code of morality to themselves, but who, following the track of established opinions, or the rules laid down by some of the many leaders of the human race, believe that, by a steadfast

[1] See the dawning of this view in his correspondence with Hutcheson, *supra*, p. 112. An essay, entitled "Of some Verbal Disputes," published in the later editions of the work now under consideration, contains some curious elucidations of it.

and disinterested pursuit of their adopted course, they are doing that which is right in the eye of God and man. It is certain, however, that in this way many a man may be pursuing a line of conduct conducive to the good of his fellow-creatures, without knowing that his actions have that ultimate end. While he follows the rules that have been laid down for him, his code of morality may be as far superior to that of his clever and aspiring neighbour, who has fabricated a system for himself, as the intelligence of the leader, followed by the one, is greater than the self-sufficient wisdom of the other. Hence multitudes in the humblest classes of society, in any well regulated community of modern Europe, will be found, almost blindly, following a code of morality as much above what the genius either of Socrates or Cicero could devise, as the order of the universe is superior to the greatest efforts of man's artificial skill.

"Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store;—
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance; and at night
Lies down secure,—her heart and pocket light.

She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit;
Receives no praise—but, though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

Oh, happy peasant! oh, unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He, praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come;
She never heard of half a mile from home;
He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers."

It was, perhaps, from a like want of inquiry into the full extent of the system, that his theory of utility encountered the charge of being a mere system of "expediency," which estimated actions according as they accomplished what appeared at the moment to be good or evil, without any regard to their ultimate consequences. He certainly left for Bentham the task of making a material addition to the utilitarian theory, by applying it to the secondary effects of actions. Thus, according to Bentham's view, when a successful highway robbery is committed, the direct evil done to the victim is but a part of the mischief accomplished. The secondary effects have an operation, if not so deep, yet very widely spread, in creating terror, anxiety, and distrust on the part of honest people, and emboldening the wicked to the perpetration of crimes. On the same principle a good measure must not be carried through the legislature by corrupt means; because the example so set, will, in the end, though not perhaps till the generation benefited by the measure has passed away, produce more bad measures than good, by lowering the tone of political morality. Had Hume kept in view these secondary effects, he never would have vindicated suicide, thought sudden death an occurrence rather fortunate than otherwise, or used expressions from which an opponent could with any plausibility infer, that, under any circumstances, he held strict female chastity in light esteem. But he was always careless about the offensive application of his principles; forgetting that if there be any thing in a set of opinions calculated deeply and permanently to outrage the feelings of mankind, the probability at least is, that they have something about them unsound,—that the mass of the public are right, and the solitary philosopher wrong.

Hume's account, in his "own life," of this period of his literary history, is contained in the following paragraph, in which, as in some other instances, it will be seen that his memory has not accurately retained the chronological sequence of his works.

"In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my 'Political Discourses,' the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London, my 'Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals;' which, in my own opinion, (who ought not to judge on that subject,) is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."

Before noticing the "Political Discourses," it is necessary to state, that during this winter of 1751, we find Hume again attempting to obtain an academic chair, and again disappointed. Adam Smith, having been Professor of Logic in the university of Glasgow, succeeded to the chair of Moral Philosophy in November 1751, on the death of Professor Craigie, its former occupant. That Hume used considerable exertions to be appointed Smith's successor, is attested by some incidental passages in his correspondence, and particularly by the following letter to Dr. Cullen.

"*Edinburgh, 21st January*, 1752.

"SIR,—The part which you have acted in the late project for my election into your college, gave me so much pleasure, that I would do myself the greatest violence did I not take every opportunity of expressing my most lively sense of it. We have failed, and are thereby deprived of great opportunities of cultivating that friendship, which had so happily com-

menced by your zeal for my interests. But I hope other opportunities will offer; and I assure you, that nothing will give me greater pleasure than an intimacy with a person of your merit. You must even allow me to count upon the same privilege of friendship, as if I had enjoyed the happiness of a longer correspondence and familiarity with you; for as it is a common observation, that the conferring favours on another is the surest method of attaching us to him, I must, by this rule, consider you as a person to whom my interests can never be altogether indifferent. Whatever the reverend gentlemen may say of my religion, I hope I have as much morality as to retain a grateful sentiment of your favours, and as much sense as to know whose friendship will give greatest honour and advantage to me. I am," &c.

The distinguished scientific man, in the course of whose researches this curious literary incident was divulged, informs us that Burke was also a candidate for this chair,[1] and that the successful competitor was a Mr. Clow. Concerning this fortunate person literary history is silent; but he has acquired a curious title to fame, from the greatness of the man to whom he succeeded, and of those over whom he was triumphant.

It is not, perhaps, to be regretted, that Hume failed in both his attempts to obtain a professor's chair.

[1] Thomson—Life of Cullen, 72-73—where the above letter is first printed. Dr. Thomson tells me, that the evidence of Burke having been a candidate is merely traditional, but that it was enough to satisfy his own mind. In the "Outlines of Philosophical Education," by Professor Jardine, who afterwards filled the same chair, there is this passage, (p. 21:) "Burke, whose genius led him afterwards to shine in a more exalted sphere, was thought of by some of the electors as a proper person to fill it. He did not, however, actually come forward as a candidate."

He was not of the stuff that satisfactory teachers of youth are made of. Although he was beyond all doubt an able man of business, in matters sufficiently important to command his earnest attention, yet it is pretty clear that he had acquired the outward manner of an absent, good-natured man, unconscious of much that was going on around him; and that he would have thus afforded a butt to the mischief and raillery of his pupils, from which all the lustre of his philosophical reputation would not have protected him.

Discoverers do not make, in ordinary circumstances, the best instructors of youth, because their minds are often too full of the fermentation of their own original ideas and partly developed systems, to possess the coolness and clearness necessary for conveying a distinct view of the laws and elements of an established system. But if this may be an incidental inconvenience in one whose discoveries are but extensions of admitted doctrines, the revolutionist who is endeavouring to pull to pieces what has been taught for ages within the same walls, and to erect a new system in its stead, can scarcely ever be a satisfactory instructor of any considerable number of young men. The teacher of the moral department of science especially must be, to a certain extent, a conformist; if he be not, what is taught in the class-room will be forgotten or contradicted in the closet. The teachers of youth are themselves not less irascible and sometimes not less prejudiced than other mortals. They have their hatreds and partisanships, often productive of acrimonious controversy; but when there is something like a unity of opinion in the systems of those who teach the same, or like subjects, these superficial discussions produce no evil fruit. Hume would have been at

peace with all who would have let his unobtrusive spirit alone; but he would probably have quietly proceeded to inculcate doctrines to which most of his fellow-labourers were strongly averse; and that, perhaps, without knowing or feeling that he was in any way departing from the simple routine of duties which the public expected of him. And thus he would probably have created in the midst of the rising youth of the day, an isolated circle of disciples, taught to despise the acquirements and opinions of their contemporaries, as these contemporaries held theirs in abhorrence.[1]

[1] Dr. Thomson says, "It might afford curious matter of speculation to conjecture what effect the appointment of Mr. Hume, or of Mr. Burke, to the chair of logic in Glasgow, would have had upon the character of that university, or upon the metaphysical, moral, and political inquiries of the age in which they lived; and what consequences were likely to have resulted from the influence which the peculiar genius and talents of either of these great men, had they been exerted in that sphere, must necessarily have had in forming the minds of such of their pupils as were to be afterwards employed in the pursuits of science, or the conduct and regulation of human affairs. It seems difficult to conceive how, as instructors of youth, they could either of them, without a considerable modification of their opinions, have taught philosophy upon the sceptical or the Berkeleian systems which they had respectively adopted; while the strict purity of their moral characters, and the great reverence which they both entertained for established institutions, give the fullest assurance, that, had either of them been appointed to the chair of logic, their academical duties would have been executed with an unceasing regard to the improvement of their pupils, and to the reputation of the society into which they had been admitted.' Life of Cullen, p. 73.

Smith, in a letter to Dr. Cullen, says, "I should prefer David Hume to any man for a colleague; but I am afraid the public would not be of my opinion; and the interest of the society will oblige us to have some regard to the opinion of the public. If the event, however, we are afraid of should happen, we can see how the public receives it. From the particular knowledge I have of Mr. Elliot's sentiments, I am pretty certain Mr. Lindsay must have proposed it to him, not he to Mr. Lindsay." Ib. p. 606.

This was an important epoch in Hume's literary history; in 1751, he produced the work which he himself considered the most meritorious of all his efforts; in 1752, he published that which obtained the largest amount of contemporary popularity, the "Political Discourses."[1] After a series of literary disappointments, borne with the spirit of one who felt within him the real powers of an original thinker and an agreeable writer, and the assurance that the world would some day acknowledge the sterling greatness of his qualifications, he now at last presented them in a form, in which they received the ready homage of the public. These Discourses are in truth the cradle of political economy; and, much as that science has been investigated and expounded in later times, these earliest, shortest, and simplest developments of its principles are still read with delight even by those who are masters of all the literature of this great subject.[2] But they

[1] Edinburgh, 1752, 8vo. Printed for Kincaid and Donaldson. It is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* list of books for February.

[2] Lord Brougham says, "Of the 'Political Discourses' it would be difficult to speak in terms of too great commendation. They combine almost every excellence which can belong to such a performance. The reasoning is clear, and unencumbered with more words or more illustrations than are necessary for bringing out the doctrine. The learning is extensive, accurate, and profound, not only as to systems of philosophy, but as to history, whether modern or ancient. The subjects are most happily chosen; the language is elegant, precise, and vigorous; and so admirably are the topics selected, that there is as little of dryness in these fine essays as if the subject were not scientific; and we rise from their perusal scarce able to believe that it is a work of philosophy we have been reading, having all the while thought it a book of curiosity and entertainment. The great merit, however, of these Discourses, is their originality, and the new system of politics and political economy which they unfold. Mr. Hume is, beyond all doubt, the author of the modern doctrines which now rule the world of science, which are to a great extent the guide of practical statesmen, and

possess a quality which more elaborate economists have striven after in vain, in being a pleasing object of study not only to the initiated but to the ordinary popular reader, and of being admitted as just and true by many who cannot or who will not understand the views of later writers on political economy.[1] They have thus the rarely conjoined merit, that, as they were the first to direct the way to the true sources of this department of knowledge, those who have gone farther, instead of superseding them, have in the general case confirmed their accuracy.

Political economy is a science of which the advanced extremities are the subject of debate and doubt, while the older doctrines are admitted by all as firm and established truths. It may be slippery ground, but it is not a tread-mill, and no step taken has ever to be entirely retraced. It is owing to this characteristic of the science that those who oppose the doctrines of modern economists do not think of denying those of David Hume; and thus, while in these essays the economist finds some of the most important doctrines of his peculiar subject set forth with a clearness and elegance with which he dare not attempt to compete, the ordinary reader, who has a distaste of new doctrines and innovating theories, awards them the respect due to old established opinion.

That they should have been, with all their innovation on received opinions, and their startling novelty,

are only prevented from being applied in their fullest extent to the affairs of nations, by the clashing interests and the ignorant prejudices of certain powerful classes." Lives of Men of Letters, p. 204.

[1] Perhaps a portion of the pleasure with which these essays are read by those who are not partial to the study of political economy, may be attributed to their having been written before that science was in possession of a nomenclature, and thus appearing clothed in the ordinary language of literature.

so popular in their own age, is also a matter which has its peculiar explanation. The dread of innovation, simply as change, and without reference to the interests it may affect, sprung up in later times, a child of the French revolution. Before that event some men were republican or constitutional in their views, and declared war against all changes which tended to throw power into the hands of the monarch. Others were monarchical, and opposed to the extension of popular rights. But if an alteration were suggested which did not affect these fundamental principles and opinions, it was welcomed with liberal courtesy, examined, and adopted or rejected on its own merits. Hence both Hume and Smith, writing in bold denunciation of all the old cherished prejudices in matters of commerce, instead of being met with a storm of reproach, as any one who should publish so many original views in the present day would be, at once received a fair hearing and a just appreciation.[1]

[1] It was in the most aristocratic quarters that these innovating doctrines were best received; for in them was the greatest amount of education, and its influence was not at that time paralyzed by general prejudices against innovation. They were more in favour with the Tories than with the Whigs. Indeed, Archdeacon Tucker, one of the boldest speculators on the economy of trade, was in state politics one of the most uncompromising Tories of his age. Fox, on the other hand, said of the "Wealth of Nations," that "there was something in all these subjects which passed his comprehension, something so wide that he could never embrace them himself, or find any one who did." But in the French treaty, and in other measures regarding trade, Pitt was in the fair way of putting them into legislative practice, when, being arrested by the French revolution, he entertained thenceforward a bitter enmity of innovation; an enmity to which, in the department of political economy, his party became the heirs, preserving the succession down nearly to the present day, when, at least by their leader, old prejudices have been already in a great measure, and are likely soon to be altogether repudiated.

Thus there was a period during which innovations, however bold or extensive, received a favourable hearing, and in which the literature both of England and of France was daily giving publicity to new theories embodying sweeping alterations of social systems. In this work the two countries presented their national characteristics. The English writers kept always in view the question how far there would be a vital principle remaining in society after the diseased part was removed; how far there was reason to suppose that the small quantity of good done to the public by any irrational system, which at the same time did much evil, might be accomplished after its abolition. The French were indiscriminate in their war against old received opinions, and offered nothing to fill their place when they were gone; and hence in some measure followed results which have made change and innovation words of dread throughout a great part of society.

Of the inquiries through which Hume brought together the materials for these essays, the reader will have found a specimen in the notes, or *adversaria* quoted above.[1] A comparison of these fragments of the raw material, with the finished result, develops this marked feature in Hume's method of working, that in the way to a short proposition, he has often read and thought at great length. The simplicity and unity of his writings were of more importance to him than the appearance of elaboration; and where others would be scattering multitudinous statements and authorities, he is content with the simple embodiment of results, conscious that inquiry will confirm in the reader's mind the justness of what he lays down. In some respects we can watch the progress of

[1] P. 126.

Hume's mind in connexion with these subjects; for in his allusions to commercial matters in his earlier works, he uses the common phraseology, such as "balance of trade," in a manner indicating an adherence to those ordinary fallacies of the day, which, when he came to examine them in his essays on "commerce," "money," "interest," "the balance of trade," "taxes," and "public credit," he extensively repudiated. His examination of the nature and value of money as a medium of exchange, is probably the best and simplest that, even down to this day, can be found. His theory, so far as it goes, has hardly ever been questioned; and indeed at present it may be said, that beyond it we know little with certainty, and that its author had at once discovered the limits at which full and satisfactory knowledge was, for nearly a century, to rest.[1] He shows that

[1] It is not intended to be maintained that Hume's Political Economy is immaculate, but merely that in the majority of instances he has fixed certain truths which later inquiries have not shaken. The following passage, along with much that is received as true doctrine, contains some observations, such as those on the tax on German linen, and on brandy, which modern economists would pronounce to be heterodox. The question of a gold or a paper currency was one which Hume did not profess to decide. He described with considerable impartiality the advantages and the disadvantages of both mediums of exchange.

"From these principles we may learn what judgment we ought to form of those numberless bars, obstructions, and imposts, which all nations of Europe, and none more than England, have put upon trade, from an exorbitant desire of amassing money, which never will heap up beyond its level, while it circulates; or from an ill-grounded apprehension of losing their specie, which never will sink below it. Could any thing scatter our riches, it would be such impolitic contrivances. But this general ill effect, however, results from them, that they deprive neighbouring nations of that free communication and exchange which the

money is not in itself property or value; that it is a mere representative, which, if cheap or dear in

Author of the world has intended, by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other.

"Our modern politics embrace the only method of banishing money, the using of paper credit; they reject the only method of amassing it, the practice of hoarding; and they adopt a hundred contrivances, which serve to no purpose but to check industry, and rob ourselves and our neighbours of the common benefits of art and nature.

"All taxes, however, upon foreign commodities, are not to be regarded as prejudicial or useless, but those only which are founded on the jealousy above mentioned. A tax on German linen encourages home manufactures, and thereby multiplies our people and industry. A tax on brandy increases the sale of rum, and supports our southern colonies. And as it is necessary that imposts should be levied for the support of government, it may be thought more convenient to lay them on foreign commodities, which can easily be intercepted at the port, and subjected to the impost. We ought, however, always to remember the maxim of Dr. Swift, that, in the arithmetic of the customs, two and two make not four, but often make only one. It can scarcely be doubted, but if the duties on wine were lowered to a third, they would yield much more to the government than at present: our people might thereby afford to drink commonly a better and more wholesome liquor; and no prejudice would ensue to the balance of trade, of which we are so jealous. The manufacture of ale beyond the agriculture is but inconsiderable, and gives employment to few hands. The transport of wine and corn would not be much inferior."

The following account of a banking practice still in lively operation in Scotland, affords a specimen of Hume's capacity to grapple with practical details.

"There was an invention which was fallen upon some years ago by the banks of Edinburgh, and which, as it was one of the most ingenious ideas that has been executed in commerce, has also been thought advantageous to Scotland. It is there called a Bank-Credit, and is of this nature:—A man goes to the bank, and finds surety to the amount, we shall suppose, of a thousand pounds. This money, or any part of it, he has the liberty of drawing out whenever he pleases, and he pays only the ordinary interest for it while it is in his hands. He may, when he pleases, repay any sum so small as twenty pounds, and the interest is discounted from

its material, is just, in the same ratio, a cheap or a dear method of accomplishing a purpose. That if a community could conduct its transactions with a small quantity of money as well as with a large, it would, so far from being poorer, be the richer by so much as the superabundant money had cost. He examines those simple laws which, when there is no disturbing influence, have a tendency to equalize the distribution of the precious metals, through the cheapness of labour and commodities where they are scarce, the nominal enhancement where they are abundant. He notices with great clearness and precision the respective effects upon the community of a state of increase, and of a state of diminution of the available currency of a country. But he enters on few of those intricate monetary questions which are now so frequently the subject of discussion. Of inquiries into the causes which affect the quantity of money in a country, the moving influences from which arise

the very day of the repayment. The advantages resulting from this contrivance are manifold. As a man may find surety nearly to the amount of his substance, and his bank-credit is equivalent to ready money, a merchant does hereby in a manner coin his houses, his household furniture, the goods in his warehouse, the foreign debts due to him, his ships at sea; and can, upon occasion, employ them in all payments, as if they were the current money of the country. If a man borrow a thousand pounds from a private hand, besides that it is not always to be found when required, he pays interest for it whether he be using it or not: his bank-credit costs him nothing except during the very moment in which it is of service to him: and this circumstance is of equal advantage as if he had borrowed money at much lower interest. Merchants likewise, from this invention, acquire a great facility in supporting each other's credit, which is a considerable security against bankruptcies. A man, when his own bank-credit is exhausted, goes to any of his neighbours who is not in the same condition, and he gets the money, which he replaces at his convenience."

gluts, drains, stagnations, and all the mysteries of finance, he shows us that he felt diffident; and on these matters, how little is the quantity of full satisfactory undisputed knowledge which we yet possess!

Indeed, one of the great merits of Hume's Essays on Political Economy is, that he knows when he is getting out of his depth, and does not conceal his position. With many writers on this subject, the point where clear and satisfactory inquiry ends, is that where dogmatism begins; but Hume stops at that point, sees and admits the difficulty, and acknowledges that he can go no farther with safety.

Among these essays there is one which, like the Oceana of Harrison, though on a smaller scale, is an attempt to construct a system of polity. It is called "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth." The system so put together is liable to practical objections at every step, and is utterly destitute of that sagacious applicability to the transactions of real business, for which the efforts in hypothetical legislation by Bentham are distinguished.[1]

[1] Indeed, in all respects, Hume's political economy is rather analytical of the effect of existing institutions and establishments, than suggestive of any views on the practicability of any great amelioration of mankind by positive regulations founded on principles of political economy. Adam Smith pursued the same method. The mission of that school was indeed rather to break down than to build up—to find out and eradicate the mischief that had been done by empiric legislation; not to attempt new arrangements. While so much mischievous matter remained to be got rid of, the field was not clear for any attempts to try the effect of plans of social organization. It is perhaps only now when the doctrines of the political economists, after having stood out against neglect and hostility, have been nearly brought into practice by the successive abolition of the regulations most objectionable in their eyes, that room has been made for the suggestion of plans of internal social organization, founded on inquiries both extensive and minute. In the present position of measures for the physical and moral purification, and the social

Another essay of a different character is conspicuous for the vast extent of the learning and research

organization of this densely peopled empire,—in the approach to an adjustment of the poor law,—the reform of the criminal code,—the prison discipline, and the sanatory suggestions; and still more, in these not being the mere dreams of utopian theorists, but receiving the countenance and support of practical statesmen, we appear to have witnessed the dawn of a new era in political economy.

Hume seems so far from having himself contemplated the application of philosophical skill to the organization of large masses of human beings, that we frequently find in his writings and in his letters, remarks on the growth of cities, sometimes speaking of certain limits which they cannot pass, at other times noticing, in a tone of despondency, the rapid progress of London, as if it were exceeding those bounds within which mankind can be kept under the dominion of law and order. In the essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations, he says, "London, by uniting extensive commerce and middling empire, has perhaps arrived at a greatness, which no city will perhaps be able to exceed;" and he fixes this number at 700,000 inhabitants, — saying farther, "from the experience of past and present ages, one might conjecture that there is a kind of impossibility that any city could ever rise much beyond this proportion." London must then have been considerably under the population he thus assigns to it, and it had not probably reached that number of inhabitants twenty-four years later, when we find him, oppressed by the disease of which he died, saying in a letter to Smith, "should London fall as much in its size as I have done, it will be the better. It is nothing but a hulk of bad and unclean humours."

During Hume's lifetime, the metropolis had been frequently outraged and intimidated — on some occasions almost desolated, by mobs of city savages; beings far more formidable and brutal than the savages of the wilderness. At the time when he published his Political Discourses, it contained bands of robbers, who followed their trade as openly as the brigands of the Abruzzi, committing robberies and murders in the middle of the city, in open day. Those who saw the city increasing in size, while it retained these evil characteristics, naturally looked upon it as a cancer, near the most vital part of the empire, and lamented accordingly its waxing prosperity and bulk. But its size was not the cause of the evil. It is now three times as populous as when Hume wrote, yet, with

which must have been expended in bringing together its crowd of apt illustrations,—that on "The Populousness of Ancient Nations." To afford a choice of so many applicable facts, directly bearing on the point, how wide must have been the research, how extensive the rejection of such fruit of that research, as did not answer his purpose! In the perusal of this essay one is inclined to regret that Hume afterwards made a portion of modern Europe the object of his historical labours, instead of taking up some department of the history of classical antiquity. The full blown lustre of Greek and Roman greatness had far more of his sympathy than the history of his own countrymen, and their slow progress from barbarism to civilisation. The materials were nearly all confined to the great spirits of antiquity, with whom he delighted to hold converse, instead of involving that heap of documentary matter with which the historian of Britain must grapple; acts of parliament, journals, writs, legal documents, &c.—all things which his soul abhorred. In such a field he might have escaped the imputation of not being a full and fair investigator; and he would, at all events, have avoided the reproach thrown on him by the prying antiquary, who, by the light of newly discovered documents, could charge him with having

much poverty, much vice, and much ignorance, it is not the same diseased and dangerous mass it then was. The comparative sober quietness of the streets, — the well ordered police, — the facilities for discovering persons who are sought after, without their being subjected in their movements to any control, inconsistent with British liberty,—are all, when practised on so large a scale, indications that human genius has great capacities for organization; and they may be, for aught that can be seen to the contrary, only the initial movements, which future generations will carry to far more wonderful results.

neglected that of which he did not, and could not, know the existence.[1]

[1] Dr. Robert Wallace, a distinguished clergyman of the Church of Scotland, had prepared for the Philosophical Society, of which he was a member, an essay, which he enlarged and published in 1752, with the title, "Dissertations on the Numbers of Mankind in Ancient and Modern Times;" adding a supplement, in which he examined Hume's discourse on the Populousness of Ancient Nations. Malthus admitted that Dr. Wallace was the first to point distinctly to the rule, that to find the limits of the populousness of any given community, we must look at the quantity of food at its disposal. But he was not successful in the controversial application of his principle. Hume's method of inquiry is a double comparison. The statements of numbers in ancient authors being compared with the numbers in existing communities, the relative organization for the supply of food in the two cases is examined, and the author finds reason to believe that the statements of numbers are greatly exaggerated by ancient authors, as the state of commerce and transit, and the amount of stock or capital available for the concentration and distribution of food, are not such as would enable such multitudes to be supported. Dr. Wallace, laying down, that where there is the most food there will be the greatest number of inhabitants, maintains, that as a much greater proportion of the people were employed in agriculture among the ancients than the moderns, there must have been more food and consequently more human beings. It is almost needless, after so much has been written on this matter, to explain at length the fallacy of this reasoning. The richest and most populous states are those of which the smallest proportion of the people are employed in agriculture. A decrease of the comparative number employed in procuring the necessaries of life is the mark of increase in wealth and abundance of all things, and is necessarily accompanied either by a proportionally improved agriculture, or the purchase of food from poorer communities.

In the subsequent editions of the "Discourses," Hume acknowledges the merit of Wallace's book, saying, "So learned a refutation would have made the author suspect that his reasonings were entirely overthrown, had he not used the precaution, from the beginning, to keep himself on the sceptical side; and, having taken this advantage of the ground, he was enabled, though with much inferior forces, to preserve himself from a total defeat."

In a letter to Henry Home in 1748, we find Hume mentioning an essay on the Protestant Succession, as one which he was to include in the edition of his "Essays Moral and Political," then preparing for the press.[1] He speaks of people having endeavoured to divert him from this publication, as one likely to be injurious to him as an official man. Perhaps he was prevailed on to adopt the view of his prudent friends, for this essay is not among the "Essays Moral and Political," but forms one of the volume of Discourses, among which it is somewhat inharmoniously placed, as it is the only one which bears a reference to the current internal party politics of the day.

The "Political Discourses" introduced Hume to the literature of the continent. The works of Quesnay, Rivière, Mirabeau, Raynal, and Turgot, had not yet appeared, but the public mind of France had been opened for novel doctrines by the bold appeal of Vauban,[2] and by the curious and original inquiries of Montesquieu. The Discourses appear to have been first translated by Eléazer Mauvillon, a native of Provence, and private secretary to Frederic Augustus, King of Poland, who published his translation in 1753.[3] Another, and better known translation, by the Abbé Le Blanc, was published in 1754.[4] This Abbé had

[1] See above, p. 239.

[2] Projet d'un Dime Royale, 4to, 1707 — a project for abolishing the feudal imposts and exemptions, tithes, and internal transit duties, and levying a general revenue. "Projet," says the Dictionnaire Historique, "digne d'un bon patriote, mais dont l'exécution est très-difficile." In Hume's notes of his early reading, we find him referring to Vauban, see p. 131.

[3] Discours Politiques traduits de L' Anglois, par M. D' M*** Amsterdam, 1753. Querard—*La France Litteraire.*

[4] With the same title as the above. It was reprinted at Berlin in 1755.

spent some time in England, and wrote a work on his experiences in Britain, called "Lettres sur les Anglois." He was the author also of a tragedy called Aben Säid, which seems to have now lost any fame it ever acquired. His translations from Hume were, however, highly popular, that of the Discourses passing through several editions; and we shall find that they obtained the approbation of Hume himself. The Abbé, in a letter to the author, gives an account of the reception of the translation,[1] the colour of which he may be supposed to have enriched, as regarding a matter in which he felt himself to be *pars magna*. He prophesies that it will produce a like sensation to that caused by the Esprit des Loix, and he finds his prophecy fulfilled. He states, that it is not only read with avidity, but that it has given rise to a multitude of other works. There can be no doubt, indeed, that as no Frenchman had previously approached the subject of political economy with a philosophical pen, this little book was a main instrument, either by causing assent or provoking controversy, in producing the host of French works on political economy, published between the time of its translation, and the publication of Smith's "Wealth of Nations," in 1776.[2]

[1] See the letter in the Appendix.

[2] There is evidence of the lasting hold which the Discourses had taken on the minds of the French, in the appearance of a new translation so late as 1766, with the title, "Essais sur le Commerce; le Luxe; l'argent; l'intérêt de l'argent; les impots; le crédit public, et la balance du commerce; par M. David Hume," published at Amsterdam in 1766, and Paris in 1767. Querard attributes this translation to a Mademoiselle de la Chaux. So far as we are entitled to judge of a translation into a foreign language, this one seems to be very spirited, speaking through French idioms and ideas, and ingeniously overcoming the very few conventionalisms which could not have been avoided by a native of Britain, speaking of British trade and finance.

The work of the elder Mirabeau in particular — L'Ami des Hommes, was in a great measure a controversial examination of Hume's opinions on population.

CHAPTER IX.

1752—1755. Æt. 41—44.

Appointment as keeper of the Advocates' Library—His Duties—Commences the History of England — Correspondence with Adam Smith and others on the History—Generosity to Blacklock the Poet—Quarrel with the Faculty of Advocates — Publication of the First Volume of the History — Its reception —Continues the History—Controversial and Polemical attacks—Attempt to subject him, along with Kames, to the Discipline of Ecclesiastical Courts—The Leader of the attack—Home's "Douglas"—The first Edinburgh Review.

"In 1752," says Hume in his "own life," "the Faculty of Advocates chose me their librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library."[1] We

[1] The appointment is thus recorded in the minutes of the Faculty of Advocates.

"*28th January*, 1752.

"The Faculty proceeded to the choice of a keeper of their library, in place of the said Mr. Thomas Ruddiman; and some members proposed that a dignified member of their own body, viz. Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie, Advocate, Professor of the Civil Law in the University of Edinburgh, should be named to that office, and others inclining that Mr. David Hume should be elected, it was agreed that the matter should be put to a vote. And the rolls being called, and votes distinctly marked and taken down and numbered, it was found that the majority had declared for the latter; upon which, the Dean and Faculty declared the said Mr. David Hume duly elected keeper of their library, and appointed that the usual salary of forty pounds sterling should be paid to him yearly on that account. And in regard that he was to have their minutes, acts, and records,

have a very glowing account of the contest for this appointment from his own pen in the following letter:

under his custody, they appointed him also clerk to the Faculty, which office had been lately resigned by Mr. David Falconer, with power to the said Mr. Hume to officiate therein by a depute.

"Mr. Gilbert Elliot, senior, curator of the library, here proposed, that in consideration that there would be a good deal of labour and trouble in delivering over the library to Mr. Hume, and his receiving the same, and doing several other things requisite and necessary relating thereto, that the Faculty should name a certain salary to some person as under keeper for some time till that business may be accomplished. The Dean and Faculty resolved, that they would name no person, nor no salary, but leave Mr. Hume, their library keeper, himself the nomination and choice of his own depute, as he was to be answerable and accountable to the Faculty for his whole charge and intromissions; but that, against the next anniversary meeting, they would take under their consideration what extraordinary work should be then accomplished, and do therein as should be found reasonable.

"Lastly, the Dean and Faculty appointed Mr. George Brown to intimate to Mr. David Hume their election of him for their library keeper, and that he should be present at their next meeting to have the oath *de fideli* administered to him."

In this office, Hume succeeded the celebrated Thomas Ruddiman. The life of this distinguished critic and philologist was written in an 8vo volume by George Chalmers, (1794.) This book is valuable as containing some of the finest specimens of mixed bombast and bathos in the English language. Chalmers was a distinguished antiquary, and his high fame in that department of research was well earned; but this did not content his ambition, and like an eminent Anglo-Saxon antiquary of the present day, he must needs mount a cap and bells on his head, by aping the style of the fine writers of his age. Gibbon and Johnson seem to have been honoured with an equal share in the elements of his style. He can say nothing without a due pomp and state; when he tells us how John Love was the son of a bookseller in Dumbarton, he must put it thus: "He was born in July, 1695, at Dunbarton, the Dunbriton of the British, the *arx Britonum* of the Romans, the Dunclidon of Ravennas, the Alcluyd of Bede, and he was the son of John Love, a bookseller, who, like greater dealers in greater towns, supplied his customers with such books as their taste required, and, like the father of

HUME TO DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Edinburgh, February 4th*, 1752.

"DEAR DOCTOR, — I have been ready to burst with vanity and self-conceit this week past; and being obliged from decorum to keep a strict watch over myself, and check all eruptions of that kind, I really begin to find my health impaired by it, and perceive that there is an absolute necessity for breathing a vein, and giving a loose to my inclination. You shall therefore be my physician, "Dum podagricus fit pugil et medicum urget." You must sustain the overflowings of my pride; and I expect, too, that by a little flattery you are to help nature in her discharge, and draw forth a still greater flux of the peccant matter. 'Tis not on my account alone you are to take part in this great event; philosophy, letters, science, virtue, triumph along with me, and have now in this one singular instance, brought over even the people from the side of bigotry and superstition.

Johnson, occasionally exhibited his books at the neighbouring fairs." We are then of course provided with a list of what these books sold by Love's father might or might not probably be, which has this reference to the life of Ruddiman, that *young* Love quarrelled with him. We then find such solemn announcements as the following: "Love had scarcely animadverted on Trotter, when he was carried before the judicatories of the kirk by Mr. Sydserf, the minister of Dumbarton, who accused him of *brewing on a Sunday*; and who, after a juridical trial, was obliged to make a public apology for having maliciously accused calumniated innocence." A printer publishing books calculated for an extensive sale is thus described:—"To these other qualities of prudence, of industry, and of attention, Ruddiman added judgment. He did not print splendid editions of books for the public good; he did not publish volumes for the perusal of the few; but he chiefly employed his press in supplying Scotland with books, which, from their daily use, had a general sale; and he was by this motive induced to furnish country shopkeepers with school-books at the lowest rate."

"This is a very pompous exordium, you see; but what will you say when I tell you that all this is occasioned by my obtaining a petty office of forty or fifty guineas a-year. Since Caligula of lunatic memory, who triumphed on account of the cockle shells which he gathered on the sea shore, no one has ever erected a trophy for so small an advantage. But judge not by appearances! perhaps you will think, when you know all the circumstances, that this success is both as extraordinary in itself, and as advantageous to me, as any thing which could possibly have happened.

"You have probably heard that my friends in Glasgow, contrary to my opinion and advice, undertook to get me elected into that college; and they had succeeded, in spite of the violent and solemn remonstrances of the clergy, if the Duke of Argyle had had courage to give me the least countenance. Immediately upon the back of this failure, which should have blasted for some time all my pretensions, the office of library keeper to the Faculty of Advocates fell vacant, a genteel office, though of small revenue; and as this happened suddenly, my name was immediately set up by my friends without my knowledge. The President, and the Dean of Faculty his son, who used to rule absolutely in this body of advocates, formed an aversion to the project, because it had not come from them; and they secretly engaged the whole party called squadroney against me. The bigots joined them, and both together set up a gentleman of character, and an advocate, and who had great favour on both these accounts. The violent cry of deism, atheism, and scepticism, was raised against me; and 'twas represented that my election would be giving the sanction of the greatest and most learned body of

men in this country to my profane and irreligious principles. But what was more dangerous, my opponents entered into a regular concert and cabal against me; while my friends were contented to speak well of their project in general, without having once formed a regular list of the electors, or considered of the proper methods of engaging them. Things went on in this negligent manner till within six days of the election, when they met together and found themselves in some danger of being outnumbered; immediately upon which they raised the cry of indignation against the opposite party; and the public joined them so heartily, that our antagonists durst show their heads in no companies nor assemblies: expresses were despatched to the country, assistance flocked to us from all quarters, and I carried the election by a considerable majority, to the great joy of all bystanders. When faction and party enter into a cause, the smallest trifle becomes important. Nothing since the rebellion has ever so much engaged the attention of this town, except Provost Stewart's trial; and there scarce is a man whose friendship or acquaintance I would desire, who has not given me undoubted proofs of his concern and regard.

"What is more extraordinary, the cry of religion could not hinder the ladies from being violently my partisans, and I owe my success in a great measure to their solicitations. One has broke off all commerce with her lover, because he voted against me! and W. Lockhart, in a speech to the Faculty, said that there was no walking the streets, nor even enjoying one's own fireside, on account of their importunate zeal. The town says, that even his bed was not safe for him, though his wife was cousin-german to my antagonist.

"'Twas vulgarly given out, that the contest was

betwixt Deists and Christians; and when the news of my success came to the Play-house, the whisper ran that the Christians were defeated. Are you not surprised that we could keep our popularity, notwithstanding this imputation, which my friends could not deny to be well founded?

"The whole body of cadies bought flambeux, and made illuminations to mark their pleasure at my success; and next morning I had the drums and town music at my door, to express their joy, as they said, of my being made a great man. They could not imagine, that so great a fray could be raised about so mere a trifle.

"About a fortnight before, I had published a Discourse of the Protestant Succession, wherein I had very liberally abused both Whigs and Tories; yet I enjoyed the favour of both parties.

"Such, dear Doctor, is the triumph of your friend; yet, amidst all this greatness and glory, even though master of 30,000 volumes, and possessing the smiles of a hundred fair ones, in this very pinnacle of human grandeur and felicity, I cast a favourable regard on you, and earnestly desire your friendship and goodwill: a little flattery too, from so eminent a hand, would be very acceptable to me. You know you are somewhat in my debt, in that particular. The present I made you of my Inquiry, was calculated both as a mark of my regard, and as a snare to catch a little incense from you. Why do you put me to the necessity of giving it to myself?

"Please tell General St. Clair, that W. St. Clair, the Advocate, voted for me on his account; but his nephew, Sir David, was so excessively holy, that nothing could bring him over from the opposite party, for which he is looked down upon a little by

the fashionable company in town. But he is a very pretty fellow, and will soon regain the little ground he has lost.

"I am, dear Doctor, yours sincerely."

This letter is evidently but half serious. That there was a good deal of contest and caballing is pretty clear; and it is equally clear that Hume took a deep interest in the result: but he appears to have been inclined to laugh a little at his own fervour, and to hide the full extent of his feelings under a cloud of playful exaggeration.

The Advocates' Library, which is now probably next in extent in Britain after the Bodleian, cannot then have borne any great proportion to its present size. It had, however, existed for upwards of seventy years, and was undoubtedly the largest collection of books in Scotland. It was rich, perhaps unrivalled, in the works of the civilians and canonists, and possessed, what was more valuable to Hume, a considerable body of British historical literature, printed and MS.[1] Hume's duties must have involved some attention, not only to the classification and custody of the books, but to the arrangements for making them accessible to the members of the Faculty, as numerous entries in his hand are to be found in the receipt book for borrowed books.[2]

[1] The state of the library in Hume's time may be guessed at by consulting the first volume of the catalogue, printed under Ruddiman's auspices in 1742, folio. It is a singular circumstance that this library has always been very deficient in the early editions of Hume's works — those which were published before his librarianship. Another set of works, which one misses in the early catalogues, consists in the controversial books, written by Logan *against* its previous librarian, Ruddiman.

[2] The assistant, whose remuneration was to be at the pleasure of

Hume informs us, that the stores thus put at his command enabled him to put his historical designs in practice, by commencing the "History of England." We shall now find a great part of his correspondence devoted to the "History of the House of Stuart," which appears to have been commenced early in 1752. The following is the earliest extant letter to Smith:

the Faculty, according to the above minute, was Walter Goodall, an unfortunate scholar, whom Hume's predecessor in office, the celebrated Thomas Ruddiman, had attached to the library as a hanger-on and miscellaneous drudge. The extent of his emoluments may be appreciated from a minute of Faculty, (7th Jan. 1758,) which, in consideration of his long services, awards him a salary of "£5 a-year, over and above what he may receive from the keeper of the library." Goodall's character and fate are summed up in the sententious remark of Lord Hailes, that "Walter was seldom sober." Yet he did not a little for historical literature. He was a violent Jacobite and champion of the innocence of Queen Mary; and in 1754 he published, in two volumes 8vo, his "Examination of the Letters said to be written by Mary, Queen of Scots, to James, Earl of Bothwell, showing by intrinsick and extrinsick evidence that they are forgeries." In 1759 he edited the best edition of Fordun's Scoti-chronicon, in two volumes folio.

The following traditional anecdote has been preserved, of the keeper and his assistant. "One day, while Goodall was composing his treatise concerning Queen Mary, he became drowsy, and laying down his head upon his MSS. in that posture fell asleep. Hume entering the library, and finding the controversialist in that position, stepped softly up to him, and laying his mouth to Watty's ear, roared out with the voice of a stentor, that Queen Mary was a whore and had murdered her husband. Watty, not knowing whether it was a dream or a real adventure, or whether the voice proceeded from a ghost or a living creature, started up, and before he was awake or his eyes well opened, he sprang upon Hume, and seizing him by the throat, pushed him to the farther end of the library, exclaiming all the while that he was some base Presbyterian parson, who was come to murder the character of Queen Mary, as his predecessors had contributed to murder her person. Hume used to tell this story with much glee, and Watty acknowledged the truth of it with much frankness." Chambers's Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen, *voce* GOODALL.

HUME *to* ADAM SMITH.

"*24th Sept.* 1752.

"DEAR SIR, — I confess I was once of the same opinion with you, and thought that the best period to begin an English history was about Henry the Seventh. But you will please to observe, that the change which then happened in public affairs, was very insensible, and did not display its influence till many years afterwards. 'Twas under James that the House of Commons began first to raise their head, and then the quarrel betwixt privilege and prerogative commenced. The government, no longer oppressed by the enormous authority of the crown, displayed its genius; and the factions which then arose, having an influence on our present affairs, form the most curious, interesting, and instructive part of our history. The preceding events, or causes, may easily be shown, in a reflection or review, which may be artfully inserted in the body of the work; and the whole, by that means, be rendered more compact and uniform. I confess, that the subject appears to me very fine; and I enter upon it with great ardour and pleasure. You need not doubt of my perseverance.

"I am just now diverted for a moment, by correcting my 'Essays Moral and Political,' for a new edition. If any thing occur to you to be inserted or retrenched, I shall be obliged to you for the hint. In case you should not have the last edition by you, I shall send you a copy of it. In that edition I was engaged to act contrary to my judgment, in retaining the sixth and seventh Essays,[1] which I had resolved to throw out, as too frivolous for the rest, and not very agreeable neither, even in that trifling manner: but Millar,

[1] "Of Love and Marriage," and "Of the Study of History."

my bookseller, made such protestations against it, and told me how much he had heard them praised by the best judges, that the bowels of a parent melted, and I preserved them alive.

"All the rest of Bolingbroke's works went to the press last week, as Millar informs me. I confess my curiosity is not much raised.

"I had almost lost your letter by its being wrong directed. I received it late, which was the reason why you got not sooner a copy of Joannes Magnus. Direct to me in Riddal's Land, Lawnmarket. I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely."[1]

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

1753.

"Dear Doctor, — I need not inform you, that in certain polite countries, a custom prevails, of writing *lettres de la nouvelle année*, and that many advantages result from this practice, which may seem merely ceremonious and formal. Acquaintance is thereby kept up, friendship revived, quarrels extinguished, negligence atoned for, and correspondences renewed. A man who has been so long conscious of his sins, that he knows not how to return into the way of salvation, taking advantage of this great jubilee, wipes off all past offences, and obtains plenary indulgence; instances are not wanting of such reclaimed sinners, who have afterwards proved the greatest saints, and have even heaped up many works of supererogation. Will you allow me, therefore, dear Doctor, in consideration of my present penitence, and hopes of my future amendment, to address myself to you, and to wish you many and happy new years, *multos et felices*.

[1] *Literary Gazette*, 1821, p. 745. The original is in the MSS. R.S.E.

May pleasures spiritual (*spirituels*) multiply upon you without a decay of the carnal. May riches increase without an augmentation of desires. May your chariot still roll along without a failure of your limbs. May your tongue in due time acquire the *social sweet garrulity* of age, without your teeth losing the sharpness and keenness of youth. May ——— but you yourself will best supply the last prayer, whether it should be for the recovery or continuance of the blessing which I hint at. In either case, may your prayer be granted, even though it should extend to the resurrection of the dead.

"I must now set you an example, and speak of myself. By this I mean that you are to speak to me of yourself. I shall exult and triumph to you a little, that I have now at last—being turned of forty, to my own honour, to that of learning, and to that of the present age—arrived at the dignity of being a householder. About seven months ago, I got a house of my own, and completed a regular family; consisting of a head, viz. myself, and two inferior members, a maid and a cat. My sister has since joined me, and keeps me company. With frugality I can reach, I find, cleanliness, warmth, light, plenty, and contentment. What would you have more? Independence? I have it in a supreme degree. Honour? that is not altogether wanting. Grace? that will come in time. A wife? that is none of the indispensable requisites of life. Books? that *is* one of them; and I have more than I can use. In short, I cannot find any blessing of consequence which I am not possessed of, in a greater or less degree; and without any great effort of philosophy, I may be easy and satisfied.

"As there is no happiness without occupation, I

have begun a work which will employ me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. 'Tis a History of Britain, from the Union of the Crowns to the present time. I have already finished the reign of King James. My friends flatter me (by this I mean that they don't flatter me) that I have succeeded. You know that there is no post of honour in the English Parnassus more vacant than that of history. Style, judgment, impartiality, care — every thing is wanting to our historians; and even Rapin, during this latter period, is extremely deficient. I make my work very concise, after the manner of the ancients. It divides into three very moderate volumes: one to end with the death of Charles the First; the second at the Revolution; the third at the Accession,[1] for I dare come no nearer the present times. The work will neither please the Duke of Bedford nor James Fraser; but I hope it will please you and posterity. Κτῆμα εἰς ἀεί.

"So, dear Doctor, after having mended my pen, and bit my nails, I return to the narration of parliamentary factions, or court intrigues, or civil wars, and bid you heartily adieu.

"*Edinburgh, Riddal's Land,*
5th January, 1753.

"P.S.—When I say that I dare come no nearer the present time than the Accession, you are not to imagine that I am afraid either of danger or offence; I hope, in many instances, that I have shown myself to be above all laws of prudence and discretion. I only mean, that I should be afraid of committing

[1] Thus it appears that it was his original intention to continue the history down to 1714, before he went back to the earlier periods.

mistakes, in writing of so recent a period, by reason of the want of materials." [1]

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Edinburgh, 6th March*, 1753.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—This is delivered to you by my friend Mr. Wedderburn,[2] who makes a jaunt to London, partly with a view to study, partly to entertainment. I thought I could not do him a better office, nor more suitable to both these purposes, than to recommend him to the friendship and acquaintance of a man of learning and conversation. He is young

'Mais dans les ames bien nées
La vertue n'attend point le nombre des années.'

It will be a great obligation, both to him and me, if you give him encouragement to see you frequently; and, after that, I doubt not you will think that you owe me an obligation —

'La in giovenile corpo senile senno.'

"But I will say no more of him, lest my letter fall into the same fault which may be remarked in his behaviour and conduct in life; the only fault which has been remarked in them, that of promising so much that it will be difficult for him to support it. You will allow that he must have been guilty of some error of this kind, when I tell you that the man, with whose friendship and company I have thought myself very much favoured, and whom I recommend to you as a friend and companion, is just twenty. I am, dear Doctor, your affectionate friend and servant."[3]

[1] From the original at Kilravock.

[2] Probably Alexander Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Chancellor Loughborough, who was then twenty years of age.

[3] From the original at Kilravock.

HUME *to* JAMES OSWALD.

"*Jack's Land, 28th June*, 1753.

"DEAR SIR,—I am to give you great and very hearty thanks for your care in providing for my cousin, at my desire. The quickness in doing it, and the many obliging circumstances attending that good office, I shall not readily forget. What is usual, they say, makes little impression; but that this rule admits of exceptions, I feel upon every instance of your friendship.

"Mr. Mure told me that you had undertaken to get satisfaction with regard to the old English *subsidies*. I cannot satisfy myself on that head; but I find that all historians and antiquarians are as much at a loss. The nobility, I observe, paid according to their rank and quality, not their estates. The counties were subjected to no valuation; but it was in the power of the commissioners to sink the sums demanded upon every individual, without raising it upon others; and they practised this art when discontented with the court, as Charles complains of with regard to the subsidies voted by his third parliament: yet it seems certain that there must have been some rule of estimation. What was it? Why was it so variable? Lord Strafford raised an Irish subsidy from £12,000 to £40,000, by changing the rule of valuation; but the Irish Parliament, after his impeachment, brought it down again: if Mr. Harding undertakes the solution of this matter, it will be requisite to have these difficulties in his eye. I am glad to hear that we are to have your company here this summer, and that I shall have an opportunity of talking over this, and many other subjects, where I want your advice and opinion. The more I advance in my work, the more I am convinced that the history of England has never

yet been written; not only for style, which is notorious to all the world, but also for matter; such is the ignorance and partiality of all our historians. Rapin, whom I had an esteem for, is totally despicable. I may be liable to the reproach of ignorance, but I am certain of escaping that of partiality: the truth is, there is so much reason to blame, and praise, alternately, king and parliament, that I am afraid the mixture of both, in my composition, being so equal, may pass sometimes for an affectation, and not the result of judgment and evidence. Of this you shall be judge; for I am resolved to encroach on your leisure and patience;

Quem vero arripuit, tenet occiditque legendo.

Let me hear of you as you pass through the town, that we may concert measures for my catching you idle, and without company, at Kirkcaldy. I am," &c.[1]

The rapidity with which the first volume of the "History of England" was composed and printed, has been the object both of surprise and censure. Hume's labours at this time must have been intense; and during the whole of the period in which he was engaged in the different departments of this great work — from 1752 to 1763 — his correspondence is more scanty than at other periods of his history. Four months elapse between the letter last printed, and the next in order which has been preserved; and in the latter, we find him very wittily alluding to those great labours which he finds absorbing the petty duties of social intercourse.

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*28th October*, 1753.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I know not if you remember the

[1] Memorials of James Oswald, p. 72.

giant in Rabelais, who swallowed every morning a windmill to breakfast, and at last was choked upon a pound of melted butter, hot from an oven. I am going to compare myself to that giant. I think nothing of despatching a quarto in fifteen or eighteen months, but am not able to compose a letter once in two years; and am very industrious to keep up a correspondence with posterity, whom I know nothing about, and who, probably, will concern themselves very little about me, while I allow myself to be forgot by my friends, whom I value and regard. However, it is some satisfaction that I can give you an account of my silence, with which I own I reproach myself. I have now brought down my History to the death of Charles the First: and here I intend to pause for some time; to read, and think, and correct; to look forward and backward; and to adopt the most moderate and most reasonable sentiments on all subjects. I am sensible that the history of the two first Stuarts will be most agreeable to the Tories; that of the two last to the Whigs; but we must endeavour to be above any regard either to Whigs or Tories.

"Having thus satisfied your curiosity — for I will take it for granted that your curiosity extends towards me—I must now gratify my own. I was very anxious to hear that you had been molested with some disorders this summer. I was told that you expected they would settle into a fit of the gout. It is lucky where that distemper overtakes a man in his chariot: we foot-walkers make but an awkward figure with it. I hope nobody has the impertinence to say to you, Physician, cure thyself. All the world allows that privilege to the gout, that it is not to be cured: it is itself a physician; and, of course, sometimes cures and sometimes kills. I fancy one fit of

the gout would much increase your stock of interjections, and render that part of speech, which in common grammars is usually the most barren, with you more copious than either nouns or verbs.

"I must tell you good news of our friend Sir Harry. I am informed that his talent for eloquence will not rust for want of employment; he bids fair for another seat of the house; and what is the charming part of the story, it is General Anstruther's seat which he is to obtain. He has made an attack on the General's boroughs, and, by the assistance of his uncle's interest and purse, is likely to prevail. Is not this delicious revenge? It brings to my mind the story of the Italian, who reading that passage of Scripture, 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,' burst forth, 'Ay, to be sure; it is too sweet for any mortal.' I own I envy Sir Harry: I never can hope to hate any body so perfectly as he does that renowned commander; and no victory, triumph, vengeance, success, can be more complete. Are not you pleased too? Pray, anatomize your own mind, and tell me how many grains of your satisfaction is owing to malice, and how many ounces to friendship. I leave the rest of this paper to be filled up by Edmonstone. I am, &c.

"P.S.—After keeping this by me eight days, I have never been able to meet with Edmonstone. I must, therefore, send off my own part of a letter which we projected in common. I shall only tell you, that I have since seen Mr. Oswald, who assures me that Anstruther's defeat is infallible."[1]

The following letter to the same friend is a curious instance of Hume's diligent efforts to attain a correct English style:—

[1] *Scots Mag.* 1802, p. 794. Collated with original at Kilravock.

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Edinburgh, 8th Dec.* 1753.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I am at present reduced to the utmost straits and difficulties. I know people are commonly ashamed to own such distresses. But to whom can one have recourse in his misfortunes, but to his friends? and who can I account my friend, if not Dr. Clephane? not a friend only in the sunshine of fortune, but also in the shade of adversity: not a security only in a calm; but in a storm a sheet-anchor. But, to cut short all prefaces,—though, commonly, beggars and authors abound with them, and I unite both these qualities,—the occasion of my distress is as follows:

"You know that the word *enough*, or *enuff*, as it is pronounced by the English, we commonly, in Scotland, when it is applied to number, pronounce enow. Thus we would say: such a one has books enow for study, but not leisure enuff. Now I want to know, whether the English make the same distinction. I observed the distinction already in Lord Shaftesbury; 'Though there be doors enow,' says he, 'to get out of life;' and thinking that this distinction of spelling words, that had both different letters, and different pronunciation, was an improvement, I followed it in my learned productions, though I knew it was not usual. But there has lately arisen in me a doubt, that this is a mere Scotticism; and that the English always pronounce the word, as if it were wrote enuff, whether it be applied to numbers or to quantity. To you, therefore, I apply in this doubt and perplexity. Though I make no question that your ear is well purged from all native impurities, yet trust not entirely to it, but ask any of your English friends,

that frequent good company, and let me know their opinion.

"It is a rule of Vaugelas always to consult the ladies, rather than men, in all doubts of language; and he asserts, that they have a more delicate sense of the propriety of expressions. The same author advises us, if we desire any one's opinion in any grammatical difficulty, not to ask him directly; for that confounds his memory, and makes him forget the use, which is the true standard of language. The best way, says he, is to engage him as it were by accident, to employ the expression about which we are in doubt. Now, if you are provided of any expedient, for making the ladies pronounce the word enough, applied both to quantity and number, I beg you to employ it, and to observe carefully and attentively, whether they make any difference in the pronunciation. I am, &c.

"P.S.—I am quite in earnest in desiring a solution of my grammatical doubt."[1]

The gentle sensitive character, and hard fate of poor blind Thomas Blacklock, the poet, operated strongly on Hume's kindly feelings. He busied himself with many schemes for enabling his unfortunate friend to gain a subsistence which might make him enjoy "the glorious privilege of being independent:" but with small success. This appears to be the only pursuit which he permitted to divert his attention, at this time, from his great work. We find him writing the following letter to a person whose position in society might enable him to do some substantial service to Blacklock.

[1] *Scots Magazine*, 1802, p. 902.

HUME *to* MATTHEW SHARP *of Hoddam.*

"*Edinburgh, 25th February*, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—I have enclosed this letter under one to my friend Mr. Blacklock, who has retired to Dumfries, and proposes to reside there for some time. His character and situation are no doubt known to you, and challenge the greatest regard from every one who has either good taste or sentiments of humanity. He has printed a collection of poems, which his friends are endeavouring to turn to the best account for him. Had he published them in the common way, their merit would have recommended them sufficiently to common sale; but, in that case, the greatest part of the profit, it is well known, would have redounded to the booksellers. His friends, therefore, take copies from him, and distribute them among their acquaintances. The poems, if I have the smallest judgment, are, many of them, extremely beautiful, and all of them remarkable for correctness and propriety. Every man of taste, from the merit of the performance, would be inclined to purchase them: every benevolent man, from the situation of the author, would wish to encourage him; and, as for those who have neither taste nor benevolence, they should be forced, by importunity, to do good against their will. I must, therefore, recommend it to you to send for a cargo of these poems, which the author's great modesty will prevent him from offering to you, and to engage your acquaintance to purchase them. But, dear sir, I would fain go farther: I would fain presume upon our friendship, (which now begins to be ancient between us,) and recommend to your civilities a man who does honour to his country by his talents, and disgraces it by the little encouragement he has hitherto met with. He is a man of very extensive knowledge and of singular

good dispositions; and his poetical, though very much to be admired, is the least part of his merit. He is very well qualified to instruct youth, by his acquaintance both with the languages and sciences; and possesses so many arts of supplying the want of sight, that that imperfection would be no hinderance. Perhaps he may entertain some such project in Dumfries; and be assured you could not do your friends a more real service than by recommending them to him. Whatever scheme he may choose to embrace, I was desirous you should be prepossessed in his favour, and be willing to lend him your countenance and protection, which I am sensible would be of great advantage to him.

"Since I saw you, I have not been idle. I have endeavoured to make some use of the library which was intrusted to me, and have employed myself in a composition of British History, beginning with the union of the two crowns. I have finished the reigns of James and Charles, and will soon send them to the press. I have the impudence to pretend that I am of no party, and have no bias. Lord Elibank says, that I am a moderate Whig, and Mr. Wallace that I am a candid Tory. I was extremely sorry that I could not recommend your friend to Director Hume,[1] as Mr. Cummin desired me. I have never exchanged a word with that gentleman since I carried Jemmy Kirkpatrick to him; and our acquaintance has entirely dropt. I am," &c.[2]

Another letter by Hume, longer and fuller of detail, though it has already appeared in a work well known and much read,[3] seems to demand insertion

[1] Alexander Hume, a director of the East India Company.

[2] *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1809, p. 553.

[3] Singer's edition of Spence's Anecdotes of Books and Men, p. 448.

here. It is addressed to the author of Polymetis and friend of Pope.

HUME *to* JOSEPH SPENCE.

Edinburgh, Oct. 15, 1754.

SIR,—The agreeable productions, with which you have entertained the public, have long given me a desire of being known to you: but this desire has been much increased by my finding you engage so warmly in protecting a man of merit, so helpless as Mr. Blacklock. I hope you will indulge me in the liberty I have taken of writing to you. I shall very willingly communicate all the particulars I know of him; though others, by their longer acquaintance with him, are better qualified for this undertaking.

The first time I had ever seen or heard of Mr. Blacklock was about twelve years ago, when I met him in a visit to two young ladies. They informed me of his case, as far as they could in a conversation carried on in his presence. I soon found him to possess a very delicate taste, along with a passionate love of learning. Dr. Stevenson had, at that time, taken him under his protection; and he was perfecting himself in the Latin tongue. I repeated to him Mr. Pope's elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady, which I happened to have by heart: and though I be a very bad reciter, I saw it affected him extremely. His eyes, indeed, the great index of the mind, could express no passion: but his whole body was thrown into agitation. That poem was equally qualified to touch the delicacy of his taste, and the tenderness of his feelings. I left the town a few days after; and being long absent from Scotland, I neither saw nor heard of him for several years. At last an acquaintance of mine told me of him, and said that he would have waited on me, if his excessive modesty had not prevented him. He soon appeared what I have ever since found him, a very elegant genius, of a most affectionate grateful disposition, a modest backward temper, accompanied with that delicate pride, which so naturally attends virtue in distress. His great moderation and frugality, along with the generosity of a few persons, particularly Dr. Stevenson and Provost Alex-

ander, had hitherto enabled him to subsist. All his good qualities are diminished, or rather perhaps embellished, by a great want of knowledge of the world. Men of very benevolent or very malignant dispositions are apt to fall into this error; because they think all mankind like themselves: but I am sorry to say that the former are apt to be most egregiously mistaken.

I have asked him whether he retained any idea of light or colours. He assured me that there remained not the least traces of them. I found, however, that all the poets, even the most descriptive ones, such as Milton and Thomson, were read by him with pleasure. Thomson is one of his favourites. I remembered a story in Locke of a blind man, who said that he knew very well what scarlet was: it was like the sound of a trumpet. I therefore asked him, whether he had not formed associations of that kind, and whether he did not connect colour and sound together. He answered, that as he met so often, both in books and conversation, with the terms expressing colours, he had formed some false associations, which supported him when he read, wrote, or talked of colours: but that the associations were of the intellectual kind. The illumination of the sun, for instance, he supposed to resemble the presence of a friend; the cheerful colour of green, to be like an amiable sympathy, &c. It was not altogether easy for me to understand him: though I believe, in much of our own thinking, there will be found some species of association. 'Tis certain we always think in some language, viz. in that which is most familiar to us; and 'tis but too frequent to substitute words instead of ideas.

If you was acquainted with any mystic, I fancy you would think Mr. Blacklock's case less paradoxical. The mystics certainly have associations by which their discourse, which seems jargon to us, becomes intelligible to themselves. I believe they commonly substitute the feelings of a common amour, in the place of their heavenly sympathies: and if they be not belied, the type is very apt to engross their hearts, and exclude the thing typified.

Apropos to this passion, I once said to my friend, Mr. Blacklock, that I was sure he did not treat love as he did colours; he did not speak of it without feeling it. There

appeared too much reality in all his expressions to allow that to be suspected. "Alas!" said he, with a sigh, "I could never bring my heart to a proper tranquillity on that head." Your passion, replied I, will always be better founded than ours, who have sight: we are so foolish as to allow ourselves to be captivated by exterior beauty: nothing but the beauty of the mind can affect you. "Not altogether neither," said he: "the sweetness of the voice has a mighty effect upon me: the symptoms of youth too, which the touch discovers, have great influence. And though such familiar approaches would be ill-bred in others, the girls of my acquaintance indulge me, on account of my blindness, with the liberty of running over them with my hand. And I can by that means judge entirely of their shape. However, no doubt, humour, and temper, and sense, and other beauties of the mind, have an influence upon me as upon others."

You may see from this conversation how difficult it is even for a blind man to be a perfect Platonic. But though Mr. Blacklock never wants his Evanthe, who is the real object of his poetical addresses, I am well assured that all his passions have been perfectly consistent with the purest virtue and innocence. His life indeed has been in all respects perfectly irreproachable.

He had got some rudiments of Latin in his youth, but could not easily read a Latin author till he was near twenty, when Dr. Stevenson put him to a grammar school in Edinburgh. He got a boy to lead him, whom he found very docible; and he taught him Latin. This boy accompanied him to the Greek class in the College, and they both learned Greek. Mr. Blacklock understands that language perfectly, and has read with a very lively pleasure all the Greek authors of taste. Mr. William Alexander, second son to our late provost, and present member, was so good as to teach him French; and he is quite master of that language. He has a very tenacious memory and a quick apprehension. The young students of the College were very desirous of his company, and he reaped the advantage of their eyes, and they of his instructions. He is a very good philosopher, and in general possesses all branches of erudition, except the mathematical. The lad who first attended him having

left him, he has got another boy, whom he is beginning to instruct; and he writes me that he is extremely pleased with his docility. The boy's parents, who are people of substance, have put him into Mr. Blacklock's service, chiefly on account of the virtuous and learned education which they know he gives his pupils.

As you are so generous to interest yourself in this poor man's case, who is so much an object both of admiration and compassion, I must inform you entirely of his situation. He has gained about one hundred guineas by this last edition of his poems, and this is the whole stock he has in the world. He has also a bursary, about six pounds a-year. I begun a subscription for suppporting him during five years; and I made out twelve guineas a-year among my acquaintance. That is a most terrible undertaking; and some unexpected refusals I met with, damped me, though they have not quite discouraged me from proceeding. We have the prospect of another bursary of ten pounds a-year in the gift of the exchequer; but to the shame of human nature, we met with difficulties. Noblemen interpose with their valet-de-chambres or nurses' sons, who they think would be burdens on themselves. Could we ensure but thirty pounds a-year to this fine genius and man of virtue, he would be easy and happy: for his wants are none but those which Nature has given him, though she has unhappily loaded him with more than other men.

His want of knowledge of the world, and the great delicacy of his temper, render him unfit for managing boys or teaching a school: he would retain no authority. Had it not been for this defect, he could have been made professor of Greek in the University of Aberdeen.

Your scheme of publishing his poems by subscription, I hope will turn to account. I think it impossible he could want, were his case more generally known. I hope it will be so by your means. Sir George Lyttleton, who has so fine a taste, and so much benevolence of temper, would certainly, were the case laid before him in a just light, lend his assistance, or rather indeed quite overcome all difficulties. I know not, whether you have the happiness of that gentleman's acquaintance.

As you are a lover of letters, I shall inform you of a piece of news, which will be agreeable to you: we may hope to see good tragedies in the English language. A young man called Hume, a clergyman of this country, discovers a very fine genius for that species of composition. Some years ago, he wrote a tragedy called Agis, which some of the best judges, such as the Duke of Argyle, Sir George Lyttleton, Mr. Pitt, very much approved of. I own, though I could perceive fine strokes in that tragedy, I never could in general bring myself to like it: the author, I thought, had corrupted his taste by the imitation of Shakspere, whom he ought only to have admired. But the same author has composed a new tragedy on a subject of invention; and here he appears a true disciple of Sophocles and Racine. I hope in time he will vindicate the English stage from the reproach of barbarism.

I shall be very glad if the employing my name in your account of Mr. Blacklock can be of any service. I am, Sir, with great regard, &c.

P.S.—Mr. Blacklock is very docible, and glad to receive corrections. I am only afraid he is too apt to have a deference for other people's judgment. I did not see the last edition till it was printed; but I have sent him some objections to passages, for which he was very thankful. I also desired him to retrench some poems entirely; such as the Ode on Fortitude, and some others, which seemed to me inferior to the rest of the collection. You will very much oblige him, if you use the same freedom. I remarked to him some Scotticisms; but you are better qualified for doing him that service. I have not seen any of his essays; and am afraid his prose is inferior to his poetry. He will soon be in town, when I shall be enabled to write you further particulars.

In 1756, Spence published his edition of Blacklock's poems, with a long introduction, in which all allusion to Hume's letter, and his services to Blacklock, is carefully avoided. Blacklock was subsequently

alienated from Hume, and was accused by some of ingratitude; while others threw the odium of the dispute on Hume, who, they said, was mortified because Spence's edition of Blacklock's Poems was not dedicated to him. Whoever may have been in the wrong, the latter supposition is erroneous, as we shall find Hume at a much later period conferring services on Blacklock, who in his turn gratefully acknowledges them. The zeal of Spence to blot from the work any mark that might connect it with the name of Hume, is alluded to with good-natured sarcasm, in a letter to Dr. Clephane, farther on.

The following letter, connected with another curious circumstance, describes an incident in Hume's conduct to Blacklock.

HUME *to* ADAM SMITH.

"*Edinburgh*, 17*th December*, 1754.

"DEAR SIR,—I told you that I intended to apply to the Faculty for redress; and, if refused, to throw up the library. I was assured that two of the curators intended before the Faculty to declare their willingness to redress me, after which there could be no difficulty to gain a victory over the other two. But before the day came, the Dean prevailed on them to change their resolution, and joined them himself with all his interest. I saw it then impossible to succeed, and accordingly retracted my application. But being equally unwilling to lose the use of the books, and to bear an indignity, I retain the office, but have given Blacklock, our blind poet, a bond of annuity for the salary. I have now put it out of these malicious fellows' power to offer me any indignity, while my motive for remaining in this office is so apparent. I

should be glad that you approve of my conduct. I own I am satisfied with myself." [1]

The following minute or memorandum, in Hume's handwriting,[2] explains the ground of his disgust. One of the "malicious fellows" appears to have been Lord Monboddo; another, Sir David Dalrymple, afterwards Lord Hailes, with whom he never was on very cordial terms.

"*Edinburgh, 27th June*, 1754.

"This day Mr. James Burnet, [Mr. Thomas

[1] It is out of some vague rumour as to this transaction, that Lord Charlemont must have constructed the following romantic story of Hume. "He was tender-hearted, friendly, and charitable in the extreme, as will appear from a fact, which I have from good authority. When a member of the University of Edinburgh, and in great want of money, having little or no paternal fortune, and the collegiate stipend being very inconsiderable, he had procured, through the interest of some friend, an office in the university, which was worth about £40 a-year. On the day when he had received this good news, and just when he had got into his possession the patent or grant entitling him to his office, he was visited by his friend Blacklock, the poet, who is much better known by his poverty and blindness than by his genius. This poor man began a long descant on his misery, bewailing his want of sight, his large family of children, and his utter inability to provide for them, or even procure them the necessaries of life. Hume, unable to bear his complaints, and destitute of money to assist him, ran instantly to his desk, took out the grant, and presented it to his miserable friend, who received it with exultation, and whose name was soon after, by Hume's interest, inserted instead of his own."—*Hardy's Memoirs of Charlemont*, p. 9. This story is constructed after the received model of the current anecdotes of Fielding, Goldsmith, and others, and is perhaps as close to the truth as many of them would be found to be, if they were minutely investigated. It is pretty clear that Hume's generosity,—for generosity he certainly had, to a very large extent, by the testimony of all who knew him, — was not so much the creature of impulse, as that of the authors who have been mentioned above: but such an instance as that just given, is a warning to distrust those anecdotes of the inconsiderate generosity of men of genius, that are put into a very dramatic shape.

[2] It is along with the letter to Smith in the MSS. R.S.E.

Millar,] and Sir David Dalrymple, curators of the library, (then follow some arrangement as to meetings,) having gone through some accounts of books, lately bought for the library, and finding therein the three following French books, Les Contes de La Fontaine, L'Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules, and L'Écumoire, they ordain that the said books be struck out of the catalogue of the library, and removed from the shelves as indecent books, and unworthy of a place in a learned library.

"And to prevent the like abuses in time to come, they appoint that after this no books shall be bought for the library, without the authority of a meeting of the curators in time of session, and of two of them in time of vacation."

It involves no approval of the licentious features of French literature, to pronounce this resolution of the curators pre-eminently absurd. A public library, purged of every book of which any portion might offend the taste of a well-regulated mind of the present day, would unfortunately be very barren in the most brilliant departments of the literature of other days and other languages. It would be wrong in the guardians of a public library to advance to the dignity of its shelves, those loathsome books written for the promotion of vice, of which, though they be published by no eminent bookseller, exhibited on no respectable counter, advertised in no newspaper, too many have found their way, by secret avenues, into the heart of society, where they corrupt its life-blood. But if Greece, Rome, and France, — if our own ancestors, had a freer tone in their imaginative literature than we have, we must yet admit their works to our libraries, if we would have these institutions depositaries of the genius of all times and all places. The

Faculty of Advocates are probably not less virtuous at this moment than they were in 1754, yet they have now on their shelves the brilliant edition of all La Fontaine's works, published at Amsterdam in 1762,—so that the expurgatory zeal of the three curators, had only put their constituents to the expense of replacing the condemned book.[1] L'Écumoire may also still be found in the Advocates' library, along with the other still more censurable works of its author, Crebillon the younger, who was certainly a free writer, but scarcely deserved the very opprobrious name which he obtained, of the French Petronius. Hume was afterwards the acquaintance and correspondent of this author, who was anxious to hear that his works were well received in Britain. Would Hume tell him that it was considered in Edinburgh an offence against decency, to admit one of them to a national library? The other condemned work, which is generally attributed to Bussy Rabutin, is not now to be found in the catalogues of the Advocates' library.[2]

Amidst such unpleasant interruptions he brought the first volume of his History to a conclusion; and thus announces the fact to a friend, while in the

[1] The fastidious Gray's appreciation of La Fontaine, is thus recorded. "The sly, delicate, and exquisitely elegant pleasantry of La Fontaine he thought inimitable, whose muse, however licentious, is never gross; not perhaps on that account the less dangerous."—Nicholls' Reminiscences. Gray's Works, v. 45.

[2] In 1756, some disputes appear to have arisen between the Faculty and their curators, owing to the arbitrary disposal of the books by the latter. On 6th January it was represented by Mr. William Johnstone, that the curators had ordered certain books to be sold, and that the practice was a very questionable one, "seeing as one curator succeeded another yearly, and different men had different tastes, the library might by that means happen to suffer considerably." It was declared that the curators had no right to dispose of books.

midst of his satisfaction he does not forget poor Blacklock.

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Sept.* 1, 1754.

"DEAR DOCTOR, — I desire you to give me joy. *Jamque opus exegi, &c.* This day I received from the press the last sheet of the volume of history which I intended to publish; and I am already well advanced in composing the second volume. It was impossible for the booksellers to refuse to several the sight of the sheets as we went on; and Whig and Tory, and Tory and Whig, (for I will alternately give them the precedence,) combine as I am told in approving of my politics. A few Christians only (and but a few) think I speak like a Libertine in religion: be assured I am tolerably reserved on this head. Elliot tells me that you had entertained apprehensions of my discretion: what I had done to forfeit with you the character of prudence, I cannot tell, but you will see little or no occasion for any such imputation in this work. I composed it *ad populum*, as well as *ad clerum*, and thought, that scepticism was not in its place in an historical production. I shall take care to convey a copy to you by the first opportunity, and shall be very proud of your approbation, and no less pleased with your reprehensions.

"Our friend Aber is again to enjoy the privilege of franking after a *hiatus valde deflendus*. Edmonstone is at Peterhead drinking the waters for his health. Sir Harry lives among his boroughs, but not so assiduous in his civilities as formerly; an instance of ingratitude which one would not expect in a man of such nice honour. I was lately told, that one day last winter he went to pay a visit to a deacon's wife, who

happened in that very instant to be gutting fish. He came up to her with open arms, and said he hoped madam was well, and that the young ladies her daughters were in good health. 'Oh, come not near me,' cried she, 'Sir Harry; I am in a sad pickle, as nasty as a beast.'—'Not at all, madam,' replied he, 'you are in a very agreeable négligé.' 'Well,' said, she, 'I shall never be able to understand your fine English.'—'I mean, madam,' returned he, 'that you are drest in a very genteel *deshabillé*.'

"There is a young man of this country, Mr. Thomas Blacklock, who has discovered a very fine genius for poetry, and under very extraordinary circumstances. He is the son of a poor tradesman, and was born blind; yet, notwithstanding these disadvantages, he has been able to acquire a great knowledge of Greek, Latin, and French, and to be well acquainted with all the classics in these languages, as well as in our own. He published last winter a volume of Miscellanies, which all men of taste admired extremely for their purity, elegance, and correctness; nor were they devoid of force and invention. I sent up half-a-dozen to Dodsley, desiring him to keep one, and to distribute the rest among men of taste of his acquaintance. I find they have been much approved of, and that Mr. Spence, in particular, has entertained thoughts of printing a new edition by subscription, for the benefit of the author. You are an acquaintance of Mr. Spence: encourage, I beseech you, so benevolent a thought, and promote it every where by your recommendation. The young man has a great deal of modesty, virtue, and goodness, as well as of genius, and notwithstanding very strict frugality, is in great necessities; but curst, or blest, with that honest pride of nature, which makes him uneasy under obligations,

and disdain all applications. I need say no more to you. Dear Doctor, believe me, with great honesty and affection, your friend and servant."[1]

Before the year 1754 came to an end, there was published, in a quarto volume of four hundred and seventy-three pages, "The History of Great Britain. Volume I. Containing the reigns of James I. and Charles I. By David Hume, Esq."[2] He had now laid the foundation of a title to that which all the genius and originality of his philosophical works would never have procured for him — the reputation of a popular author. His other works might exhibit a wider and a more original grasp of thought: but the readers of metaphysics and ethics are a small number; while the readers of history, and especially of the history of their own country, are a community nearly as great as the number of those who can read their own language. In this large market he produced his ware; and after some hesitation on the part of those ordinary readers, who had never known his genius as a philosopher, and of those who knew his previous writings, but did not esteem them, it took the place of a permanent marketable commodity — a sort of necessary of literary life. The general reader found in it a distinct and animated narrative, announced in a style easy, strong, and elegant. The philosopher and statesman found in it profound and original views, such as the author of the "Treatise of Human Nature" could not wield the pen without occasionally dropping on his page. It was a work at once great in its excellencies and beauties, and

[1] From the original at Kilravock.

[2] Edinburgh: published by Hamilton, Balfour, and Neill. It is entered in the *Gentleman's Magazine* list for October.

great in its defects; yet even the latter circumstance swelled its fame, by producing a host of controversial attacks, conducted by no mean champions. No author or speaker could launch into a defence of monarchical prerogative without triumphantly citing the opinion of Hume;—no friend of any popular cause, from Chatham downwards, could appeal to history without condemning his plausible perversions. No season of a debating society has ever ended without the vexed questions he has started being discussed in conjunction with his name. Every newspaper has recorded the editor's opinion of the tendency of Hume's History. In reviews and magazines, and political pamphlets, the references, laudatory or condemnatory, are still, notwithstanding all that has been done for British history in later times, unceasing; and some books, of no small bulk, have been written, solely against the History, as one pamphlet is written against another.

Of a book which is so universally known, and has been subjected to so thorough a critical examination, both in its narrative and its reflective parts, a detailed criticism in a work like the present would be superfluous and unwelcome. But the great extent of the controversial writings on the subject, the quantity of able criticism which the controversy has produced, the new light it has frequently been the mean of throwing on portions of British history, and the variety of contending opinions it has elicited, do, in some measure, enable one who is partial to that kind of reading, to note slightly and fugitively the leading opinions which this controversy has developed; and thus, looking back through the whole vista of debate and inquiry, to describe, in general terms, the estimate which those who have since Hume's time studied

British history to best effect, have formed of his great work. Perhaps, for casting a glance at the general principles he has announced as to the progress of the constitution and public opinion in Britain, as well as the general scope and extent of his historical labours, his work may be divided into two leading departments; the history from the accession of the house of Tudor downwards, which he completed in 1759; and the history anterior to that epoch, which was published at a later period of his life. In this arrangement, the general observations will find their place in a subsequent portion of this work; while, in the meantime, the opinions entertained of the narrative department of the volume, published in 1754, may be noticed.

The chief charge brought against it has been, that in describing the great conflict which ended in the protectorate, the author has shown a partiality to the side of the monarch, and particularly to Charles I. and his followers; and has endeavoured to make the opposite side—Independents, Presbyterians, Republicans, or under whatever name they raised the banner of opposition to the court—odious and ridiculous.

Before Hume's day, every historian of those times took his side from the beginning of the narrative, and proclaimed himself either the champion or the opponent of the monarchical party. Salmon, Echard, and Carte[1] wrote histories, in which, if they had spoken with decency or temper of Oliver Cromwell, the Long Parliament, the Presbyterians, or the Independents, they would have felt that they had as much neglected their duty, as an advocate who, seeing some

[1] Carte's last volume was posthumously published in the year after Hume's first.

irregularity in the case of the opposite party, fails to take advantage of it. The title-page of Salmon announced his project: it promised "Remarks on Rapin, Burnet, and other Republican writers, vindicating the just right of the Established Church, and the prerogatives of the crown, against the wild schemes of enthusiasts and levellers, no less active and diligent in promoting the subversion of this beautiful frame of government, than their artful predecessors in hypocrisy," &c. But Hume professed to approach the subject as a philosopher, and to hold the balance even between Salmon and Echard on the one side, and Oldmixon and Rapin on the other. Hence, when it was believed that, under this air of impartiality, he masked a battery well loaded and skilfully pointed against the principles of the constitution, and the efforts of those who had fought for freedom, a louder cry of indignation was raised against him than had ever assailed the avowed retainers of the anti-popular cause.

The tendency of the History was unexpected and inexplicable. In his philosophical examination of the principles of government, written in times of hot party feeling, he had discarded the theories of arbitrary prerogative and divine right with bold and calm disdain. His utilitarian theory represented the good of the people, not the will or advantage of any one man, or small class of men, as the right object of government. Harrison, Milton, and Sidney, had not expressed opinions more thoroughly democratic than his. "Few things," says a critic, well accustomed to trace literary anomalies to their causes in the minds of their authors, "are more unaccountable, and, indeed, absurd, than that Hume should have taken part with high church and high monarchy men. The persecu-

tions which he suffered in his youth from the Presbyterians, may, perhaps, have influenced his ecclesiastical partialities.[1] But that he should have sided with the Tudors and the Stuarts against the people, seems quite inconsistent with all the great traits of his character. His unrivalled sagacity must have looked with contempt on the preposterous arguments by which the *jus divinum* was maintained. His natural benevolence must have suggested the cruelty of subjecting the enjoyments of thousands to the caprice of one unfeeling individual; and his own practical independence in private life, might have taught him the value of those feelings which he has so mischievously derided."[2]

In truth, it does not appear that Hume had begun his work with the intention of adopting a side in the politics of the time; and that sympathy, rather than rational conviction or political prejudice, dictated his partisanship. His misapprehensions regarding the state of the constitution, and the early foundation of British liberties, may be attributed to another cause; but in his treatment of the question between Charles I. and his opponents, he appears to have set out with the design of preserving a rigid neutrality; to have gradually felt his sympathies wavering,—to have at first restrained them, then let them sway him slightly from the even middle path, and finally allowed them to take possession of his opinions; opinions which, in their form of expression, still preserved that

[1] He does not appear to have suffered any *persecutions* before he wrote the first volume of the History of the Stuarts, unless the opposition to his appointment as a professor deserves that name. The tone of the History itself was indeed one of the grounds on which he was attacked in the ecclesiastical courts.

[2] Article by Lord Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review*, xii. 276.

tone of calm impartiality with which he had set out. In the work of Clarendon — a scholar, a gentleman, a dignified and elegant writer, a man of high-toned and manly feeling—he found an attractive guide. In looking at the structure of Hume's narrative, we can see that Clarendon was the author, whose account of the great conflict was chiefly present to his mind; and dwelling on his words and ideas, he must have in some measure felt the influence of that plausible writer. As he went on with his narrative, he found on the one side refinement and heroism, an elevated and learned priesthood, a chivalrous aristocracy, a refined court,—all "the divinity" that "doth hedge a king," followed by all the sad solemnity of fallen greatness,—an adverse contest, borne with steady courage, and humiliation and death endured with patient magnanimity. On the other side appeared plebeian thoughts, rude uncivil speech, barbarous and ludicrous fanaticism, and success consummated by ungenerous triumphs. His philosophical indifference gave way before such temptations, and he went the way of his sympathies. Yet he never permitted himself boldly and distinctly to profess partisanship: he still bore the badge of neutrality; and perhaps believed that he was swerving neither to the right hand nor to the left. An eloquent writer has thus vividly described the tone of his History:

Hume, without positively asserting more than he can prove, gives prominence to all the circumstances which can support his case. He glides lightly over those which are unfavourable to it. His own witnesses are applauded and encouraged; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Every thing that is offered on

the other side is scrutinized with the utmost severity; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for comment and invective; what cannot be denied is extenuated, or passed by without notice. Concessions even are sometimes made; but this insidious candour only increases the effect of this vast mass of sophistry.[1]

Yet when there was any thing of a grand and solemn character in the proceedings of the Republican party,—when they were not connected with the rude guards, and their insults to the fallen majesty of England; with the long psalms, long sermons, and long faces of the Puritans; with Trouble-world Lilburne, Praise-God Barebones, or eccentric, stubborn, impracticable William Prynne,—he could employ the easy majesty of his language in surrounding them with a suiting dignity of tone; and he did so with apparent pleasure. Witness his description of the meeting of the Long Parliament, and of the preparations for the king's trial before the High Court of Justice.

He seems to have felt, not unfrequently, the inconsistencies that must be perceptible between the tone of his historical, and the political doctrines of his philosophical works; and his attempts to reconcile them with each other, sometimes only serve to make the difference more conspicuous. Speaking of the act of holding judgment on Charles I., he says, "If ever, on any occasion, it were laudable to conceal truth from the populace, it must be confessed that the doctrine of resistance affords such an example; and that all speculative reasoners ought to observe, with regard to this principle, the same cautious silence which the laws, in every species of government, have ever pre-

[1] Article on History by Mr. Macaulay. *Edinburgh Review*, xlvii. p. 359.

scribed to themselves." One could imagine a congress of crowned heads, or a conclave of cardinals, adopting such a view; and resolving, at the same moment, that it should be kept as secret as the grave. But that a man should speak of the right of resistance as existing, and say the knowledge of it ought not to be promulgated, and print and publish this in a book in his own vernacular language, is surely as remarkable an anomaly, as the history of practical contradictions can exhibit.

Owing to his opinion of the manner in which the Abbé Le Blanc had rendered his "Political Discourses" into French, he expressed a wish, in the following courteous letter, that the History should have the benefit of being translated by the same hand.

HUME *to the* ABBÉ LE BLANC.

"*Edinburgh*, 15*th October*, 1754.

"SIR,—You will receive, along with this, a copy of the first volume of my 'History of Great Britain,' which will be published next winter in London. The honour which you did me in translating my 'Political Discourses,' inspires me with an ambition of desiring to have this work translated by the same excellent hand. The great curiosity of the events related in this volume, embellished by your elegant pen, might challenge the attention of the public. If you do not undertake this translation, I despair of ever seeing it done in a satisfactory manner. Many intricacies in the English government,—many customs peculiar to this island, require explication; and it will be necessary to accompany the translation with some notes, however short, in order to render it intelligible to foreigners. None but a person as well acquainted as you with England and the English constitution, can pretend to

clear up obscurities, or explain the difficulties which occur. If, at any time, you find yourself at a loss, be so good as to inform me. I shall spare no pains to solve all doubts; and convey all the lights which, by my long and assiduous study of the subject, I may have acquired. The distance betwixt us need be no impediment to this correspondence. If you favour me frequently with your letters, I shall be able to render you the same service as if I had the happiness of living next door to you, and was able to inspect the whole translation. In this attempt, the knowledge of the two languages is but one circumstance to qualify a man for a translator. Though your attainments, in this respect, be known to all the world, I own that I trust more to the spirit of reflection and reasoning which you discover; and I thence expect that my performance will not only have justice done it, but will even receive considerable improvements as it passes through your hands. I am, with great regard, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant."[1]

The Abbé received the proposal with rapture: he offered to translate with the zeal not only of the illustrious author's admirer, but of his friend. He desired Hume to postpone the publication for a while in London, and to send him the sheets with the utmost rapidity, lest he might be forestalled by some of that numerous host of rapid penmen, who are ready, in obedience to the commands of the booksellers, to translate such works, without knowing English, or even French. Holland was at that period a great book mart, and there the Abbé found rivals still more expeditious; for he was obliged to write to Hume, at a time when he seems to have made little or no progress

[1] Printed in the Appendix of Voltaire et Rousseau, par Henry Lord Brougham, p. 340.

with his work, stating that he is disheartened by the prospect of the immediate appearance of a translation in Holland, where they employ, in the rendering of excellent books into French, people who are only fit to manufacture paper. In the end, having encountered a host of interruptions, he intimates that he has placed the work in the hands of another person.[1]

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Oct.* 18*th*, 1754.

"DEAR DOCTOR,—I received your kind letter, for which I thank you. Poor Aber[2] is disappointed by a train of Norland finesse, alas—what you will. I

[1] See the letters in Appendix. The French bibliographical works of reference, which are in general very full, do not mention any translation of the History of the Stuarts earlier than 1760, when Querard and Brunet give the following:

Histoire de la Maison de Stuart sur le trône d'Angleterre, jusqu'au détrônement de Jacques II. traduite de l'Anglois de David Hume, (par L'Abbé Prévost.) Londres (Paris) 1760. 3 vols. in 4to.

The edition about to appear in Holland, which threw Le Blanc into despair, seems to have been overlooked. This Prévost, or Prévôt, is the well-known author of the "Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut," which still holds its place in French popular literature, though it bears but a small proportion to the bulk of his other voluminous works which are forgotten. The authors of the Dictionnaire Historique, say they find in his translation of Hume, "un air étranger, un style souvent embarrassé, sémé d'Anglicismes, d'expressions peu Françoises, de tours durs, de phrases louches et mal construites." This abbé led an irregular life, being a sort of disgraced ecclesiastic, and his death was singularly tragical. He had fallen by the side of a wood in a fit of apoplexy. Being found insensible, he was removed as a dead body to the residence of a magistrate, where a surgeon was to open the body to discover the cause of death. At the first insertion of the knife, a scream from the victim terrified all present: but it was too late; the instrument had entered a vital part.

[2] Colonel Abercrombie.

have given orders to deliver to you a copy of my History, as soon as it arrives in London, and before it be published. Lend it not till it be published. It contains no paradoxes, and very little profaneness,—as little as could be expected. The Abbé Le Blanc, who has translated some other of my pieces, intends to translate it, and the enclosed is part of a copy I send him: excuse the freedom—you may perhaps receive some other packets of the same kind, which you will please to send carefully to the post-house. The General and Sir Henry are in town, who remember you. Edmonstone is well, and I just now left him a-bed. I may perhaps be in London for good and all in a year or two. Show me that frugality could make £120 a-year do, and I am with you: a man of letters ought always to live in a capital, says Bayle. I believe I have no more to say. You'll own that my style has not become more verbose, on account of my writing quartos. Yours affectionately," &c.[1]

HUME *to* WILLIAM MURE *of Caldwell.*

"DEAR MURE,—I had sent to Sharpe a copy of my History, of which I hope you will tell me your opinion with freedom;

> Finding, like a friend,
> Something to blame, and something to commend.

"The first quality of an historian, is to be true and impartial. The next to be interesting. If you do not say that I have done both parties justice, and if Mrs. Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles, I shall burn all my papers and return to philosophy.

"I shall send a copy to Paris to L'Abbé Le Blanc,

[1] From the original at Kilravock.

who has translated some other of my pieces; and therefore your corrections and amendments may still be of use, and prevent me from misleading or tiring the French nation. We shall also make a Dublin edition; and it were a pity to put the Irish farther wrong than they are already. I shall also be so sanguine as to hope for a second edition, when I may correct all errors. You know my docility." [1]

HUME *to* MRS. DYSART *of Eccles.*

"*9th October.*

"DEAR MADAM, — As I send you a long book, you will allow me to write a short letter, with this fruit of near two years' very constant application, my youngest and dearest child. You should have read it sooner; but, during the fine weather, I foresaw that it would produce some inconvenience: either you would attach yourself so much to the perusal of me, as to neglect walking, riding, and field diversions, which are much more beneficial than any history; or if this beautiful season tempted you, I must lie in a corner, neglected and forgotten. I assure you I would take the pet if so treated. Now that the weather has at last broke, and long nights are joined to wind and rain, and that a fireside has become the most agreeable object, a new book, especially if wrote by a friend, may not be unwelcome. In expectation, then, that you are to peruse me first with pleasure, then with ease, I expect to hear your remarks, and Mr. Dysart's, and the Solicitor's. Whether am I Whig or Tory? Protestant or Papist? Scotch or English? I hope you do not all agree on this head, and that there are disputes among you about my principles. We never see you in town,

[1] MS. R.S.E.

and I can never get to the country; but I hope I preserve a place in your memory. I am, &c.

"P.S.—I have seen John Hume's new unbaptized play,[1] and it is a very fine thing. He now discovers a great genius for the theatre."

[Written at the top.] "I must beg of you not to lend the book out of your house, on any account, till the middle of November; any body may read it in the house."[2]

In a continuation of the letter, of which the part relating to Blacklock was cited above, he thus desires Adam Smith's opinion of the History:—

"Pray tell me, and tell me ingenuously, what success has my History met with among the judges with you. I mean Dr. Cullen, Mr. Betham, Mrs. Betham, Mr. Leichman, Mr. Muirhead, Mr. Crawford, &c. Dare I presume that it has been thought worthy of examination, and that its beauties are found to overbalance its defects? I am very desirous to know my errors; and I dare swear you think me tolerably docile to be so veteran an author. I cannot, indeed, hope soon to have an opportunity of correcting my errors; this impression is so very numerous. The sale, indeed, has been very great in Edinburgh; but how it goes on in London, we have not been precisely informed. In all cases I am desirous of storing up instruction; and as you are now idle, (I mean, have nothing but your class to teach,

[1] "I presume this was 'Douglas;' and the expression, 'he now discovers a great genius for the theatre,' I suppose was meant to imply Mr. D. Hume's opinion of its being better fitted for the stage than *Agis*." — *Mackenzie.*

[2] Mackenzie's Account of Home, p. 102. The original in the MS. R.S.E.

which to you is comparative idleness,) I will insist upon hearing from you.

"*Edinburgh*, 17*th Dec.* 1754."

The following letter, still on the same subject, introduces the name of a new correspondent.

HUME *to the* EARL *of* BALCARRES.

"*Edinburgh*, 17*th December*, 1754.

"MY LORD,—I did really intend to have paid my respects to your lordship this harvest; but I have got into such a recluse, studious habit, that I believe myself only fit to converse with books; and, however I may pretend to be acquainted with dead kings, shall become quite unsuitable for my friends and cotemporaries. Besides, the great gulf that is fixed between us terrifies me. I am not only very sick at sea, but often can scarce get over the sickness for some days.

"I am very proud that my History, even upon second thoughts, appears to have something tolerable in your lordship's eyes. It has been very much canvassed and read here in town, as I am told; and it has full as many inveterate enemies as partial defenders. The misfortune of a book, says Boileau, is not the being ill spoke of, but the not being spoken of at all. The sale has been very considerable here, about four hundred and fifty copies in five weeks. How it has succeeded in London, I cannot precisely tell; only I observe that some of the weekly papers have been busy with me. — I am as great an Atheist as Bolingbroke; as great a Jacobite as Carte; I cannot write English, &c. I do, indeed, observe that the book is in general rather more agreeable to those they call Tories; and I believe, chiefly for this

reason, that, having no places to bestow, they are naturally more moderate in their expectations from a writer. A Whig, who can give hundreds a-year, will not be contented with small sacrifices of truth; and most authors are willing to purchase favour at so reasonable a price.

"I wish it were in my power to pass this Christmas at Balcarres. I should be glad to accompany your lordship in your rural improvements, and return thence to relish with pleasure the comforts of your fireside. You enjoy peace and contentment, my lord, which all the power and wealth of the nation cannot give to our rulers. The whole ministry, they say, is by the ears. This quarrel, I hope, they will fight out among themselves, and not expect to draw us in as formerly, by pretending it is for our good. We will not be the dupes twice in our life.

"I have the honour to be, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant." [1]

The literary success that would satisfy Hume

[1] "Lives of the Lindsays, or a Memoir of the Houses of Crawford and Balcarres, by Lord Lindsay." Hume's correspondent was James, the fifth earl. He had had the misfortune to be "out in the fifteen," and though a zealous and hardy soldier, he in vain attempted to rise in the army; and at last retiring in disgust, he betook himself to learned leisure. In the pleasing work above referred to, he is thus picturesquely described: "Though his aspect was noble, and his air and deportment showed him at once a man of rank, yet there was no denying that a degree of singularity attended his appearance. To his large brigadier wig, which hung down with three tails, he generally added a few curls of his own application, which I suspect would not have been considered quite orthodox by the trade. His shoe, which resembled nothing so much as a little boat with a cabin at the end of it, was slashed with his pen-knife, for the benefit of giving ease to his honest toes; here — there — he slashed it where he chose to slash, without an idea that the world or its fashions had the smallest right to smile at his shoe; had they smiled, he would have smiled too, and probably said, 'Odsfish!

required to be of no small amount. Though neither, in any sense, a vain man, nor a caterer for ephemeral applause, he was greedy of fame; and what would have been to others pre-eminent success, appears to have, in his eyes, scarcely risen above failure. His expressions about the reception of his History, have a tinge of morbidness. In John Home's memorandum of his latest conversations, it is said that "he recurred to a subject not unfrequent with him, that is, the design to ruin him as an author, by the people that were ministers at the first publication of his History."[1] In his "own life," written at the same time, the only passage truly bitter in its tone, gives fuller expression to a like feeling:—"I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, Churchman and Sectary, Freethinker and Religionist, Patriot and Courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard

I believe it is not like other people's; but as to that, look, d' ye see? what matters it whether so old a fellow as myself wears a shoe or a slipper.'"

[1] Mackenzie's Account of Home, p. 175.

of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

"I was however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been, at that time, breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage, and to persevere."

Andrew Millar, a countryman of Hume, had, about this time, formed an extensive publishing connexion in London. An arrangement was made, by which he should take the History under his protection,—publish the subsequent volumes, and push the sale of the first. The arrangement is said to have been recommended by Hume's Edinburgh publishers; and it shows how much, in that age, as probably also in this, even a great work may depend on the publisher's exertions, for giving it a hold on the public mind. Hume had a pretty extensive correspondence with Millar. Many of the letters are purely on business, and sometimes on business not very important; but others, such as the following, have some literary interest. Hume appears to have contemplated a translation of Plutarch, and Millar seems to have wished to make him editor of a London newspaper.

HUME *to* ANDREW MILLAR.

"12*th April*, 1755.

"The second volume of my History I can easily find

a way of conveying to you when finished and corrected, and fairly copied. Perhaps I may be in London myself about that time. I have always said, to all my acquaintance, that if the first volume bore a little of a Tory aspect, the second would probably be as grateful to the opposite party. The two first princes of the house of Stuart were certainly more excusable than the two second. The constitution was, in their time, very ambiguous and undetermined; and their parliaments were, in many respects, refractory and obstinate. But Charles the Second knew that he had succeeded to a very limited monarchy. His long parliament was indulgent to him, and even consisted almost entirely of royalists. Yet he could not be quiet, nor contented with a legal authority. I need not mention the oppressions in Scotland, nor the absurd conduct of King James the Second. These are obvious and glaring points. Upon the whole, I wish the two volumes had been published together. Neither one party nor the other would, in that case, have had the least pretext of reproaching me with partiality.

"I shall give no farther umbrage to the godly, though I am far from thinking, that my liberties on that head have been the real cause of checking the sale of the first volume. They might afford a pretext for decrying it to those who were resolved on other accounts to lay hold of pretexts.

"Pray tell Dr. Birch, if you have occasion to see him, that his story of the warrant for Lord Loudon's execution, though at first I thought it highly improbable, appears to me at present a great deal more likely.[1] I find the same story in "Scotstarvet's

[1] He does not, however, mention it in any of the subsequent editions of his History.

Staggering State,"[1] which was published here a few months ago. The same story, coming from different canals, without any dependence on each other, bears a strong air of probability. I have spoke to Duke Hamilton, who says, that I shall be very welcome to peruse all his papers. I shall take the first opportunity of going to the bottom of that affair; and if I find any confirmation of the suspicion, will be sure to inform Dr. Birch. I own it is the strongest instance of any which history affords, of King Charles's arbitrary principles.

"I have made a trial of Plutarch, and find that I take pleasure in it; but cannot yet form so just a notion of the time and pains which it will require, as to tell you what sum of money I would think an equivalent. But I shall be sure to inform you as soon as I come to a resolution. The notes requisite will not be numerous,—not so many as in the former edition. I think so bulky a book ought to be swelled as little as possible; and nothing added but what is absolutely requisite. The little trial I have made, convinces me that the undertaking will require time. My manner of composing is slow, and I have great difficulty to satisfy myself."[2]

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"*Edinburgh, 9th January*, 1755.

"Dear Sir,—I beg you to make my compliments to the Society,[3] and to take the fault on yourself, if I

[1] Scott of Scotstarvet's Staggering State of Scots Statesmen.—A collection of contemporary characters, drawn by a shrewd but bitter and unscrupulous observer.

[2] MS. R.S.E.

[3] Evidently the Philosophical Society. It was instituted in 1731, chiefly as a medical society; but, in 1739, its plan was so far enlarged, as to admit of the above comprehensive denomination.

have not executed my duty, and sent them, this time, my anniversary paper. Had I got a week's warning I should have been able to have supplied them. I should willingly have sent some sheets of the history of the Commonwealth, or Protectorship; but they are all of them out of my hand at present, and I have not been able to recall them.

"I think you are extremely in the right, that the Parliament's bigotry has nothing in common with Hiero's generosity. They were, themselves, violent persecutors at home, to the utmost of their power. Besides, the Hugunots in France were not persecuted; they were really seditious, turbulent people, whom their king was not able to reduce to obedience. The French persecutions did not begin till sixty years after.

"Your objection to the Irish massacre is just, but falls not on the execution, but the subject. Had I been to describe the massacre of Paris, I should not have fallen into that fault. But, in the Irish massacre, no single eminent man fell, or by a remarkable death.[1] If the elocution of the whole chapter be blamable, it is because my conception laboured with too great an idea of my subject, which is there the most important. But that misfortune is not unusual. I am," &c.[2]

We shall have farther occasion to notice the deep interest which Hume took in John Home's tragedy of Douglas. The following letter, which is without date, was, probably, written at the beginning of the year 1755, and before Home made his unsuccessful jour-

[1] Sic in MS.

[2] *Lit. Gazette*, 1822, p. 745. The original is in the MSS. R.S.E.

ney to London, to submit his effort to the judgment of Garrick.

Hume *to* John Home.

"Dear Sir,—With great pleasure I have more than once perused your tragedy. It is interesting, affecting, pathetic. The story is simple and natural; but what chiefly delights me, is to find the language so pure, correct, and moderate. For God's sake read Shakspere, but get Racine and Sophocles by heart. It is reserved to you, and you alone, to redeem our stage from the reproach of barbarism.

"I have not forgot your request to find fault; but as you had neither numbered the pages nor the lines in your copy, I cannot point out particular expressions. I have marked the margin, and shall tell you my opinion when I have the pleasure of seeing you. The more considerable objections seem to be these: *Glenalvon's* character is too abandoned. Such a man is scarce in nature; at least it is inartificial in a poet to suppose such a one, as if he could not conduct his fable by the ordinary passions, infirmities, and vices of human nature. *Lord Barnet's*[1] character is not enough decided; he hovers betwixt vice and virtue; which, though it be not unnatural, is not sufficiently theatrical nor tragic. After *Anna* had lived eighteen years with *Lady Barnet*, and yet had been kept out of the secret, there seems to be no sufficient reason why, at that very time, she should have been let into it. The spectator is apt to suspect that it was in order to instruct him; a very good end, indeed, but which might have been attained by a careful and artificial conduct of the dialogue.

[1] This name changed to *Randolph*, after the first representation. —*Mackenzie.*

"There seem to be too many casual rencounters. *Young Forman*[1] passing by chance, saves *Lord Barnet; Old Forman*, passing that way, by chance, is arrested. Why might not *Young Forman* be supposed to be coming to the castle, in order to serve under *Lord Barnet*, and *Old Forman*, having had some hint of his intention, to have followed him that way?

[Some lines torn off and lost.]

Might not *Anna* be supposed to have returned to her mistress after long absence? This might account for a greater flow of confidence."[2]

[1] Changed to *Norval*, before the tragedy was brought on the stage.—*Mackenzie.*

[2] Mackenzie's Account of Home, p. 100.

The following paper made its first appearance in *The Edinburgh Weekly Chronicle*, a few years ago, when it was edited by Mr. Hislop, a gentleman said to be well acquainted with theatrical matters. It is here repeated, not as being believed, but because having excited some attention when it first appeared, it found its way into some books connected with Scottish literature.

"It may not be generally known, that the first rehearsal took place in the lodgings in the Canongate, occupied by Mrs. Sarah Warde, one of Digges's company; and that it was rehearsed by, and in presence of the most distinguished literary characters Scotland ever could boast of. The following was the cast of the piece on the occasion:—

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord Randolph, . . .	Dr. Robertson, Principal, Edinburgh.
Glenalvon, ...	David Hume, Historian.
Old Norval, ...	Dr. Carlyle, Minister of Musselburgh.
Douglas, ...	John Home, the Author.
Lady Randolph, . . .	Dr. Ferguson, Professor.
Anna, (the Maid,) . .	Dr. Blair, Minister, High Church.

"The audience that day, besides Mr. Digges, and Mrs. Warde, were, the Right Honourable Patrick Lord Elibank, Lord Milton, Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, (the two last were then only lawyers,) the Rev. John Steele and William Home, ministers. The company, all but Mrs. Warde, dined afterwards in the Erskine Club, in the Abbey."

HUME *to* ANDREW MILLAR.

"*Edinburgh, 12th June*, 1755.

"DEAR SIR,—I give you a great many thanks for thinking of me in your project of a weekly paper. I approve very much of the design, as you explain it to me; and there is nobody I would more willingly engage with. But, as I have another work in hand, which requires great labour and care to finish, I cannot think of entering on a new undertaking, till I have brought this to a conclusion. Your scheme would require me immediately to remove to London; and I live here, at present, in great tranquillity, with all my books around me; and I cannot think of changing while I have so great a work in hand as the finishing of my History.

"There are four short Dissertations, which I have kept some years by me, in order to polish them as much as possible. One of them is that which Allan Ramsay mentioned to you. Another, of the Passions; a third, of Tragedy; a fourth, some Considerations previous to Geometry and Natural Philosophy.[1] The whole, I think, would make a volume, a fourth less than my Inquiry, as nearly as I can calculate; but it would be proper to print it in a larger type, in order to bring it to the same size and price. I would have

The reader must take this statement at its own value, which he will probably not consider high. The "cast," has no pretensions to be a transcript of any contemporary document; for Dr. Robertson was not then Principal of the University, but minister of the country parish of Gladsmuir; and Ferguson was not a Professor, but an army chaplain, with leave of absence, spending his time chiefly in Perthshire. Lord Kames, spoken of as "only" a lawyer, had been raised to the bench in 1752.

[1] This last appears to have been suppressed. The publication of the others is mentioned further on.

it published about the new year; and I offer you the property for fifty guineas, payable at the publication. You may judge, by my being so moderate in my demands, that I do not propose to make any words about the bargain. It would be more convenient for me to print here, especially one of the Dissertations, where there is a good deal of literature; but, as the manuscript is distinct and accurate, it would not be impossible for me to correct it, though printed at London. I leave it to your choice; though I believe that it might be as cheaply and conveniently and safely executed here. However, the matter is pretty near indifferent to me. I would fain prognosticate better than you say with regard to my History; that you expect little sale till the publication of the second volume. I hope the prejudices will dissipate sooner. I am," &c.[1]

In 1755, an effort was made to establish a periodical Review in Scotland, characterized by a higher literary spirit, and a more original tone of thinking, than the other periodical literature of the day could boast. It assumed the name, so famous in later times, of *The Edinburgh Review*. With such contributors as Smith, Robertson, Blair, and Jardine, it could not fail to achieve its object, so far as its own merit was concerned; but the public did not appreciate its excellence, and it died after two half-yearly numbers, which may now be found on the shelves of the curious. On this matter, Mackenzie says,

"David Hume was not among the number of the writers of the *Review*, though we should have thought he would have been the first person whose co-operation they would have

[1] MS. R.S.E.

sought. But I think I have heard that they were afraid both of his extreme good nature, and his extreme artlessness; that, from the one, their criticisms would have been weakened or suppressed; and, from the other, their secret discovered. The merits of the work strongly attracted his attention, and he expressed his surprise, to some of the gentlemen concerned in it, with whom he was daily in the habit of meeting, at the excellence of a performance written, as he presumed, from his ignorance on the subject, by some persons out of their own literary circle. It was agreed to communicate the secret to him at a dinner, which was shortly after given by one of their number. At that dinner he repeated his wonder on the subject of *The Edinburgh Review*. One of the company said he knew the authors, and would tell them to Mr. Hume upon his giving an oath of secrecy. "How is the oath to be taken," said David, with his usual pleasantry, "of a man accused of so much scepticism as I am? You would not trust my Bible oath; but I will swear by the το καλον and the το πρεπον never to reveal your secret." He was then told the names of the authors and the plan of the work; but it was not continued long enough to allow of his contributing any articles.[1]

It was a strong judgment to pass on a man who filled the office of secretary of legation, and under-secretary of state, that a secret was not safe in his keeping. Perhaps Hume had acquired absent habits about trifles. But he could transact important business with ability, and keep important secrets with strictness. There is a general propensity to find, in the nature and habits of abstruse thinkers, an innocent simplicity about the passing affairs of the world, which is often dispelled by a nearer view of their characters. Hume was careless about small matters; but in the serious transactions of life, he was sagacious, prompt, and energetic. Though he did not

[1] Account of John Home, p. 24.

contribute to it, he owed some substantial services to this periodical, in the conflict in the ecclesiastical courts, which, in the course of events, comes now to be considered.[1]

Hume was not one of those who, when they find that the opinions they have formed are at variance with those of the rest of mankind, blaze the unpopular portions forth in the light of day, or fling them in the face of their adversaries. Among his intimate friends, he could pass sly jests about his opinions; using, in regard to them, those strong expressions which he knew his adversaries would apply to them. But he disliked ostentation of any kind. He particularly

[1] There is an amusing traditional anecdote, with which this periodical has some connexion. Dr. Walter Anderson, minister of Chirnside, having caught the fire of literary ambition, made the remark to Hume, one afternoon when they had been enjoying the hospitalities of Ninewells: "Mr. David, I daresay other people might write books too; but you clever fellows have taken up all the good subjects. When I look about me, I cannot find one unoccupied." — "What would you think, Mr. Anderson," said Hume, in reply, "of a History of Crœsus, king of Lydia? This has never yet been written." Dr. Anderson was a man who understood no jesting, and held no words as uttered in vain; so away he goes, pulls down his Herodotus, and translates all the passages in the first book relating to Crœsus, with all the consultations of the oracles, and all the dreams; only interweaving with them, from his own particular genius, some very sage and lengthy remarks on the extent to which there was real truth in the prophetic revelations of the Pythoness. This book, which is now a great rarity, was reviewed with much gravity and kindness in *The Edinburgh Review*. It was more severely treated in *The Critical Review*, edited by Smollett, where it is said, "There is still a race of soothsayers in the Highlands, derived, if we may believe some curious antiquaries, from the Druids and Bards that were set apart for the worship of Apollo. The author of the History before us may, for aught we know, be one of these venerable seers, though we rather take him to be a Presbyterian teacher, who has been used to expound apothegms that need no explanation."

disliked the ostentation of singularity; and so little was he aware that he was outraging any of the world's opinions, in promulgating the fruits of his metaphysical speculations, that he appears to have been much astonished that any one should find in them any ground for serious objection, and to have marvelled greatly that clergymen and others should deem him an unfit person to be a professor of moral philosophy, or a teacher of youth. "Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quæ velis, et quæ sentias dicere, licet," was the motto of his first work; and he seems to have thought that he lived in an age when speculation might soar with unclipped wings, and when his opinions would be questioned only before the tribunal of reason.

In all this, however, he now found that he was mistaken, and that there were persons who, professing to have charge of these matters, and to know the final judgment concerning them, thought right to execute it on earth, by punishing the man whose opinions were different from their own. The soul of this crusade was a certain Reverend George Anderson, a restless, fiery, persevering being, probably of great polemical note in his day, the observed of all observers as he passed through the city, a Boanerges in church courts; but now only known through the eminence of those against whom the fury of his zeal was directed. Hume was not the only object of pursuit. Other game was started at the same time in the person of his friend, Lord Kames. It is somewhat remarkable, that it was against the latter that the pursuit was most persevering and bitter. He was certainly not a man likely to have provoked such attacks. It is true that he meddled with dangerous subjects, but he did so with great caution and skill. Bred to the practice of the bar, at a time when the

advocate often felt a temptation to insinuate doctrines which could not be proclaimed without risk, he became like a chemist who is expert in the safe manipulation of detonating materials. Yet he made a narrow escape; for as he had been raised to the bench in 1752, any proceeding by a church court, professing to subject him to punishment, temporal or eternal, however lightly it might have fallen on a philosopher, might have tended materially to injure the usefulness of a judge.

Kames' work, which was published in 1751, and entitled "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion," bears evident marks of having been written in opposition to the opinions laid down by Hume, although the author probably did not wish to expose the works of his kind friend to odium, by making a particular reference to them. It is clear that he considered his own opinions likely to be so very popular among the orthodox, that it would be doing an evil turn to his friend, to mention him as the promulgator of views on the other side. In his advertisement, he said, the object of his book was "to prepare the way for a proof of the existence of the Deity," and the Essays end with a prayer. Their leading principle is, that according to the doctrine of predestination, there can be no liberty to human beings, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, while the Deity has nevertheless, for wise purposes, which we cannot fathom, implanted in our race the feeling that we are free. Some have held that, while the scheme of predestination was exhibited by Hume as a mere metaphysical theory, Kames united it to vital religion. He had the misfortune, however, to write in a philosophical tone; and those who constituted themselves judges of the matter, seem to have taken example

from the stern father, who, when there is a quarrel in the nursery, punishes both sides, because quarrelling is a thing not allowed in the house. In a letter to Michael Ramsay, Hume says, in continuation of a passage printed above,[1] "Have you seen our friend Harry's Essays? They are well wrote, and are an unusual instance of an obliging method of answering a book. Philosophers must judge of the question; but the clergy have already decided it, and say he is as bad as me! Nay, some affirm him to be worse,—as much as a treacherous friend is worse than an open enemy." Dr. Blair is believed to have been the champion of Kames; and the following notice of his connexion with the controversy, given by Mackenzie, is valuable and instructive.

It is a singular enough coincidence with some church proceedings, about fifty years after,[2] that Dr. Blair, in defence of his friend's Essays, expressly states, that one purpose of those Essays was to controvert what appeared to him to be a very dangerous doctrine, held by the author of certain other *Essays*, then recently published, (by Mr. David Hume,) that, by no principle in human nature, can we discover any real connexion between *cause* and *effect*. According to Dr. Blair, the object of one of Lord Kames' Essays is to show, that though such connexion is not discoverable by *reason*, and by a process of argumentative induction, there is, nevertheless, a real and obvious connexion, which every one intuitively perceives between an *effect* and its *cause*. We feel and acknowledge, that every effect implies a cause; that nothing can begin to exist without a cause of its existence. "We are not left," says the author of the Vindication, "to gather our belief of a *Deity*, from inferences and conclusions deduced through intermediate steps, many or few. How unhappy would it be, for the great bulk of mankind, if this were necessary!

[1] Page 342. MS. R.S.E.

[2] The case of Sir John Leslie, see above, p. 89.

The first attack was made in a pamphlet, called "An Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion, personally and publicly stated: illustrated with reference to 'Essays on Morality and Natural Religion,'" published at Edinburgh, in 1753; the work of Anderson himself, and endowed with all the marks of its author. This was levelled against Kames alone; but it was followed in 1755 by a pamphlet, in which, under the name of Sopho, he was coupled with Hume, thus: "An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho and David Hume, Esq., addressed to the consideration of the "reverend and honourable members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." "My design," says the author, "is to analyze the works of these celebrated authors, giving their own expressions under the different heads to which they seem to belong. This method, I imagine, will not only give the clearest view of the sentiments of these gentlemen, but is such as they themselves must allow to be the most fair and candid; because if, in stating the proposition, I should happen to mistake their meaning, their own words, subjoined, must immediately do them justice." With this preamble, the writer ranges his quotations under such heads as, "All distinction betwixt virtue and vice is merely imaginary;" "Adultery is very lawful, but sometimes not expedient," &c.

A counter pamphlet was published, called "Observations upon a pamphlet, entitled 'An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho and David Hume, Esq.'"[1] In reference to his opponents' boasted series of accurate quotations, the writer of this answer says, "If there

[1] Attributed to Dr. Blair by Tytler, (Life of Kames, i. 142,) as well as by Mackenzie; as on the preceding page.

should be found passages which are neither the words nor the meaning of the author, the falsehood cannot be palliated nor excused." And then, after giving a specimen of these "accurate" quotations, he says,—

"In all that page there is no such sentence, neither is there any such sentiment to be found. The passage from the beginning is as follows," &c. and he continues: "To glean disunited sentences, to patch them together arbitrarily, to omit the limitations or remarks with which a proposition is delivered; can this be styled exhibiting the sentiments of an author? I hope I shall not be thought to deviate into any thing ludicrous, when I refer the reader to a well-known treatise of the Dean of St. Patrick's, in which the inquisitorial method of interpretation in the Church of Rome is by so just and so severe raillery rendered detestable. *Si non totidem sententiis, ast totidem verbis; si non totidem verbis, ast totidem syllabis; si non totidem syllabis ast totidem literis.* This is the genuine logic of persecution." [1]

The matter was brought before the immediately ensuing General Assembly, that of 1755; by which a general resolution was passed, expressive of the Church's "utmost abhorrence" of "impious and infidel principles," and of "the deepest concern on account of the prevalence of infidelity and immorality, the prin-

[1] Besides those mentioned above, the occasion seems to have called forth some blasts of the trumpet, still better suited to split the ears of the groundlings—such as "The Deist stretched on a Death-bed, or a lively Portraiture of a Dying Infidel." The contemporary *Edinburgh Review*, which carried on a guerilla warfare on the side of the threatened philosophers, thus commences a notice of this production. "This is a most extraordinary performance. The hero of it is an infidel, 'a humorous youth,' as the author describes him, 'a youth whose life was one successive scene of pleasantry and humour: who laughed at revelation, and called religion *priestcraft* and *grimace:* a gay and sprightly free-thinker. But yesterday,' says he 'this gay and sprightly free-thinker *revelled* his usual *round* of gallantry and applause, till, satiated at length, he staggered to bed devoid of sense and reason.' We suppose, (continues the reviewer,) the author's meaning is, that he went to bed very drunk.'"

ciples whereof have been, to the disgrace of our age and nation, so openly avowed in several books published of late in this country, and which are but too well known amongst us." But this general anathema was not sufficient to satisfy the pious zeal of Mr. Anderson, who, in anticipation of the meeting of the Assembly in 1756, wrote another pamphlet, called "Infidelity a proper object of censure."

The initiatory step in the legislative business of the General Assembly, is the bringing before it an overture, which has previously obtained the sanction, either of one of the inferior church courts, or of a committee of the Assembly for preparing overtures. In such a committee, it was moved on 28th May, 1756, that the following overture should be transmitted to the Assembly.

"The General Assembly, judging it their duty to do all in their power to check the growth and progress of infidelity; and considering, that as infidel writings have begun of late years to be published in this nation, against which they have hitherto only testified in general, so there is one person styling himself David Hume, Esq. who hath arrived at such a degree of boldness as publicly to avow himself the author of books containing the most rude and open attacks upon the glorious gospel of Christ, and principles evidently subversive even of natural religion, and the foundations of morality, if not establishing direct atheism: therefore the Assembly appoint the following persons . . . . . as a committee to inquire into the writings of this author, to call him before them, and prepare the matter for the next General Assembly."

The matter was discussed with the usual keenness of such debates in such bodies. But toleration was triumphant, and the overture was rejected by fifty votes to seventeen.[1]

Still the indefatigable Anderson returned to the

[1] *Scots Magazine*, 1756, pp. 248, 280, where those who are

charge, though he brought it against humbler persons in a less conspicuous arena. As he found the authors above his reach, he resolved to proceed against the booksellers; and be brought before the Presbytery of Edinburgh a "Petition and Complaint" against Alexander Kincaid and Alexander Donaldson, the

partial to such reading, will find a pretty clear abstract of the debate. The General Assembly had its hands at that time pretty full. A deadly dispute had arisen between the partisans of the old and new church music, which is thus described in Ritchie's Life of Hume, p. 57:

"At this time the Scottish church was thrown into a general ferment by an attempt to introduce the reformed music. In accomplishing this, the most indecent scenes were exhibited. It was not uncommon for a congregation to divide themselves into two parties, one of which, in chaunting the psalms, followed the old, and the other the new mode of musical execution; while the infidel, who was not in the habit of frequenting the temple, now resorted to it, not for the laudable purpose of repentance and edification, but from the ungodly motive of being a spectator of the contest. . . . .

"During the present dispute, it was customary for the partisans of the different kinds of music to convene apart, in numerous bodies, for the purpose of practising, and to muster their whole strength on the Sabbath. The moment the psalm was read from the pulpit, each side, in general chorus, commenced their operations; and as the pastor and clerk, or precentor, often differed in their sentiments, the church was immediately in an uproar. Blows and bruises were interchanged by the impassioned songsters, and, in many parts of the country, the most serious disturbances took place."

They had, at the same time, to conduct the war against the tragedy of Douglas, and the frequenters of the theatre. Home himself, as is well known, escaped the odium of ecclesiastical punishment, by resigning his ministerial charge. Order was then taken with those clergy who could not resist being present on so memorable an occasion as the performance of a great national tragedy, written by a member of their own body. Among these the Rev. Mr. White of Libberton was subjected to the modified punishment of a month's suspension from office, because 'he had attended the representation only once, when he endeavoured to conceal himself in a corner, to avoid giving offence.' *Scots Mag.* for 1757, p. 47.

publishers of "Kames' Essays," praying, "that the said printer and booksellers may be summoned to the next meeting of the Presbytery, and there and then to declare and give up the author of the said book; and that he and they may be censured, according to the law of the gospel, and the practice of this and all other well-governed churches." Anderson indeed would seem to have imbibed the spirit of the great Anthony Arnauld: who, when Nicole spoke of some rest from the endless war of polemical controversy, exclaimed, "Rest! will you not have enough of rest hereafter, through all eternity?" Before the Presbytery could meet he accordingly published another pamphlet, called "the Complaint of George Anderson, minister of the gospel, verified by passages in the book libelled." He died in the 19th October,[1] just ten days before the meeting of the presbytery, for which he had made such active preparation. He fell in harness, and the departure of the restless spirit of the champion from its tenement of clay, was death to the cause. After the perusal of written pleadings, and a formal debate, the complaint was dismissed.

This matter appears to have given Hume very little disturbance. He does not mention it in his "own life." He laboured uninterruptedly at the second volume of his History; and his correspondence, which we may now resume, will be found to pursue its even tenor, taking no farther notice of the proceedings of his opponents, than the simple question put to Smith, whether it will be a matter of much consequence if he should be excommunicated?

[1] Ritchie says, (p. 79,) that he was in his eightieth year. One is tempted to say with Lady Macbeth, "Who would have thought the old man had so much blood in him." Besides these conflicts in Scotland, he was conducting a war in England against Mallet, for the publication of Bolingbroke's works.

HUME *to* DR. CLEPHANE.

"*Edinburgh, 20th April*, 1756.

"DEAR DOCTOR, — There is certainly nothing so unaccountable as my long silence with you; that is, with a man whose friendship I desire most to preserve of any I know, and whose conversation I would be the most covetous to enjoy, were I in the same place with him. But to tell the truth, we people in the country, (for such you Londoners esteem our city,) are apt to be troublesome to you people in town; we are vastly glad to receive letters which convey intelligence to us of things which we should otherwise have been ignorant of, and can pay them back with nothing but provincial stories, which are no way interesting. It was perhaps an apprehension of this kind which held my pen: but really, I believe, the truth is, when I was idle, I was lazy — when I was busy, I was so extremely busy, that I had no leisure to think of any thing else. For, dear Doctor, what have we to do with news on either side, unless it be literary news, which I hope will always interest us? and of these, London seems to me as barren as Edinburgh; or rather more so, since I can tell you that our friend Hume's 'Douglas,' is altered and finished, and will be brought out on the stage next winter, and is a singular, as well as fine performance, [[1]] of the spirit of the English theatre, not devoid of Attic and French elegance. You have sent us nothing worth reading this winter; even your vein of wretched novels is dried up, though not that of scurrilous partial politics. We hear of Sir George Lyttleton's History, from which the populace expect a great deal: but I

[1] Word illegible.

hear it is to be three quarto volumes. 'O, magnum horribilem et sacrum Libellum.' — This last epithet of *sacrum* will probably be applicable to it in more senses than one. However, it cannot well fail to be readable, which is a great deal for an English book now-a-days.

"But, dear Doctor, even places more hyperborean than this, more provincial, more uncultivated, and more barbarous, may furnish articles for a literary correspondence. Have you seen the second volume of Blackwell's 'Court of Augustus?' I had it some days lying on my table, and, on turning it over, met with passages very singular for their ridicule and absurdity. He says that Mark Antony, travelling from Rome in a post-chaise, lay the first night at Redstones: I own I did not think this a very classical name; but, on recollection, I found, by the Philippics, that he lay at Saxa Rubra. He talks also of Mark Antony's favourite poet, Mr. Gosling, meaning Anser, who, methinks, should rather be called Mr. Goose. He also takes notice of Virgil's distinguishing himself, in his youth, by his epigram on Crossbow the robber! Look your Virgil, you'll find that, like other robbers, this man bore various names. Crossbow is the name he took at Aberdeen, but Balista at Rome. The book has many other flowers[1]

[1] That such flowers were not confined to Aberdeen, may be seen in the following passage of the "Carpentariana.":

"Si l'on vouloit traduire les noms Grecs et Romains en François, on les rendroit souvent ridicules. J'ai vu une traduction des épitres de Cicéron à Atticus, imprimée chez Thiboust, en 1666, pag. 217, où l'auteur est tombé dans cette faute ridicule, en traduisant cet endroit: *Pridie autem apud me Crassipes fuerat*, Le jour précédent Gros-pied fut chez moi. Véritablement *Crassipes*, veut dire Gros-pied, mais il est ridicule de la traduire ainsi: et il ne faut jamais toucher aux noms propres, soit qu'ils fassent un bon ou mauvais effet, rendus dans notre langue. Un autre traducteur des

of a like nature, which made me exclaim, with regard to the author,

> Nec *certe*[1] apparet . . . . utrum
> Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental
> Moverit incestus. Certe furit.

But other people, who have read through the volume, say that, notwithstanding these absurdities, it does not want merit; and, if it be so, I own the case is still more singular. What would you think of a man who should speak of the mayorality of Mr. Veitch; meaning the consulship of Cicero?—Is not this a fine way of avoiding the imputation of pedantry? Perhaps Cicero, to modernize him entirely, should be called Sir Mark Veitch, because his father was a Roman knight.

"I do not find your name among the subscribers of my friend Blacklock's poems, you have forgot; buy a copy of them and read them, they are many of them very elegant, and merit esteem, if they came from any one, but are admirable from him. [[2]] Spence's industry in so good a work, but there is a circumstance of his conduct that will entertain you. In the Edinburgh edition there was a stanza to this effect:

> The wise in every age conclude,
> What Pyrrho taught and Hume renewed,
> That Dogmatists are fools.

"Mr. Spence would not undertake to promote a London subscription, unless my name, as well as Lord Shaftesbury's, (who was mentioned in another place,) were erased: the author frankly gave up Shaftesbury, but said that he would forfeit all the profit he might

èpitres de Cicéron, lui fait dire, Mademoiselle votre fille, Madame votre femme; et je me souviens d'un auteur qui appelloit Brutus et Collatinus, les Bourgmestres de la ville de Rome.

[1] Satis. [2] Words obliterated.

expect from a subscription, rather than relinquish the small tribute of praise which he had paid to a man whom he was more indebted to than to all the world beside. I heard by chance of this controversy, and wrote to Mr. Spence, that, without farther consulting the author, I, who was chiefly concerned, would take upon me to empower him to alter the stanza where I was mentioned. He did so, and farther, having prefixed the life of the author, he took occasion to mention some people to whom he had been obliged, but is careful not to name me; judging rightly that such good deeds were only *splendida peccata*, and that till they were sanctified by the grace of God they would be of no benefit to salvation.[1]

"I have seen (but, I thank God, was not bound to read) Dr. [Birch's] 'History of the Royal Society.' Pray make my compliments to him, and tell him, that I am his most obliged humble servant. I hope you understand that the last clause was spoken ironically. You would have surprised *him* very much had you executed the compliment. I shall conclude this article of literature by mentioning myself. I have finished the second volume of my History, and have maintained the same unbounded liberty in my politics which gave so much offence: religion lay more out of my way; and there will not be . . .[2] in this particular: I think reason, and even some eloquence, are on my side, and . . . will, I am confident, get the better of faction and folly, which are the . . .[2] least they never continue long in the same shape. I am sorry, however, that you speak nothing on this head in your postscript to me.

[1] See above p. 393.

[2] Words obliterated by decay of the MS.

"It gives me great affliction, dear Doctor, when you speak of gouts and old age. Alas! you are going down hill, and I am tumbling fast after you. I have, however, very entire health, notwithstanding my studious sedentary life. I only grow fat more than I could wish. When shall I see you? God knows. I am settled here; have no pretensions, nor hopes, nor desires, to carry me to court the great. I live frugally on a small fortune, which I care not to dissipate by jaunts of pleasure. All these circumstances give me little prospect of seeing London. Were I to change my habitation, I would retire to some provincial town in France, to trifle out my old age, near a warm sun in a good climate, a pleasant country, and amidst a sociable people. My stock would then maintain me in some opulence; for I have the satisfaction to tell you, dear Doctor, that on reviewing my affairs, I find that I am worth £1600 sterling, which, at five per cent, makes near 1800 livres a-year—that is, the pay of two French captains.

"Edmonstone left this town for Ireland. I wish he were out of the way: he has no prospect of advancement suitable to his merit. Sir Harry, I hope, has only run backwards to make a better jump. Pray imitate not my example — delay not to write; or, if you do, I will imitate yours, and write again without waiting for an answer. Ever most sincerely."[1]

[1] Original at Kilravock.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

FRAGMENTS OF A PAPER IN HUME'S HANDWRITING, DESCRIBING THE DESCENT ON THE COAST OF BRITTANY, IN 1746, AND THE CAUSES OF ITS FAILURE.[1]

THE forces under Lieutenant General St. Clair consisted of five battalions, viz. the first battalion of the 1st Royal, the 5th Highlanders, 3d Brag's, 4th Richbell's, 2d Harrison's, together with part of Frampton's, and some companies of Marines, making in all about 4500 men. The fleet consisted of . Though this army and fleet had been at first fitted out for entering upon action in summer 1746, and making conquest of Canada, it was found, after several vain efforts to get out of the Channel, first under Commodore Cotes, then under Admiral Listock, that so much time had been unavoidably lost, from contrary winds and contrary orders, as to render it dangerous for so large a body of ships to proceed thither. The middle of May was the last day of rendezvous appointed at Spithead; and in the latter end of August, the fleet had yet got no farther than St. Helen's, about a league below it. It is an observation, that in the latter end of autumn, or beginning of winter, the north-west winds blow so furiously on the coast of North America, as to render it always difficult, and often impossible, for ships that set out late to reach any harbour in those parts. Instances have been found of vessels that have been obliged to take shelter from these storms, even in the Leeward Islands. It was therefore become necessary to abandon all thoughts of proceeding to America that season; and as the transports were fitted out and fleet equipped at great expense, an attempt was hastily made to turn them to some account in Europe, during the small remainder of the summer. The distress of the allies in Flanders demanded the more immediate attention of the English nation and ministry,

[1] See ante, p. 218.

and required, if possible, some speedy remedy. 'Twas too late to think of sending the six battalions under General St. Clair, to reinforce Prince Charles of Lorraine, who commanded the armies of the allies; and their number was, besides, too inconsiderable to hope for any great advantages from that expedient. 'Twas more to be expected, that falling on the parts of France, supposed to be defenceless and disarmed, they might make a diversion, and occasion the sending a considerable detachment from the enemy's army in Flanders. But as time pressed, and allowed not leisure to concert and prepare this measure, the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State, hoped to find that General St. Clair had already planned and projected some enterprise of this nature. He formed this presumption on a hint which had been started very casually, and which had been immediately dropped by the General.

In the spring, when the obstructions and delays thrown in the way of the American enterprise were partly felt and partly foreseen, the Secretary, lamenting the great and, he feared, useless expense to which the nation had been put by that undertaking, gave occasion to the General to throw out a thought, which would naturally occur in such a situation. He said, "Why may you not send the squadron and troops to some part of the coast of France, and at least frighten and alarm them as they have done us; and, as all their troops are on the Flanders and German frontiers, 'tis most probable that such an alarm may make them recall some of them?" The subject was then no farther prosecuted; but the King, being informed of this casual hint of the General's, asked him if he had formed any plan or project by which the service abovementioned might be effectuated. He assured his majesty that he had never so much as thought of it; but that, if it was his pleasure, he would confer with Sir John Ligonier, and endeavour to find other people in London who could let him into some knowledge of the coast of France. To this the King replied, "No, no; you need not give yourself any trouble about it." And accordingly the General never more thought of it, farther than to inform the Duke of Newcastle of this conference with his majesty. However, the Duke being willing that the person who was to execute the undertaking should also be the projector of it, by which means both greater success might be hoped from it, and every body else be screened from reflection in case of its miscarriage, desired, in his letter of the 22d of August, that both the Admiral and General should give their opinion of such an invasion; and particularly the General, who, having, he said, formed some time ago a project of this nature, might be the better prepared to give his thoughts with

regard to it. They both jointly replied, that their utter ignorance made them incapable of delivering their sentiments on so delicate a subject; and the General, in a separate letter, recalled to the Duke's memory the circumstances of the story, as above related.

Though they declined proposing a project, they both cheerfully offered, that if his majesty would honour them with any plan of operation for a descent, they would do their best to carry it into execution. They hoped that the Secretary of State, who, by his office, is led to turn his eyes every where, and who lives at London, the centre of commerce and intelligence, could better form and digest such a plan, than they who were cooped up in their ships, in a remote sea-port town, without any former acquaintance with the coast of France, and without any possibility of acquiring new knowledge. They at least hoped, that so difficult a task would not be required of them as either to give their sentiments without any materials afforded them to judge upon, or to collect materials, while the most inviolable secrecy was strictly enjoined on them. It is remarkable, that the Duke of Newcastle, among other advantages proposed by this expedition, mentions the giving assistance to such Protestants as are already in arms, or may be disposed to rise on the appearance of the English, as if we were living in the time of the League, or during the confusion of Francis the Second's minority.

Full of these reflections, they sailed from St. Helens on the 23d of August, and arrived at Plymouth on the 29th, in obedience to their orders, which required them to put into that harbour for farther instructions. They there found positive orders to sail immediately, with the first fair wind, to the coast of France, and make an attempt on L'Orient, or Rochefort, or Rochelle, or sail up the river of Bourdeaux; or, if they judged any of these enterprises impracticable, to sail to whatever other place on the western coast they should think proper. Such unbounded discretionary powers could not but be agreeable to commanders, had it been accompanied with better, or indeed with any intelligence. As the wind was then contrary, they had leisure to reply in their letters of the 29th and 30th. They jointly represented the difficulties, or rather impossibilities, of any attempt on L'Orient, Rochefort, and Rochelle, by reason of the real strength of these places, so far as their imperfect information could reach; or, if that were erroneous, by reason of their own absolute want of intelligence, guides, and pilots, which are the soul of all military operations.

The General, in a separate letter, enforced the same topics, and added many other reflections of moment. He said, that of all the

places mentioned in his orders, Bourdeaux, if accessible, appeared to him the properest to be attempted; both as it is one of the towns of greatest commerce and riches in France, and as it is the farthest situated from their Flanders' army, and on these accounts an attack on it would most probably produce the wished-for alarm and diversion. He added, that he himself knew the town to be of no strength, and that the only place there capable of making any defence, is Chateau Trompette, which serves it as a citadel, and was intended, as almost all citadels are, more as a curb, than a defence, on the inhabitants. But though these circumstances promised some success, he observed that there were many other difficulties to struggle with, which threw a mighty damp on these promising expectations. In the first place, he much questioned if there was in the fleet any one person who had been ashore on the western coast of France, except himself, who was once at Bourdeaux; and he, too, was a stranger to all the country betwixt the town and the sea. He had no single map of any part of France on board with him; and what intelligence he may be able to force from the people of the country can be but little to be depended on, as it must be their interest to mislead him. And if money prove necessary, either for obtaining intelligence, carrying on of works, or even subsisting the officers, he must raise it in the country; for, except a few chests of Mexican dollars, consigned to other uses, he carried no money with him. If he advanced any where into the country, he must be at a very great loss for want of horses to draw the artillery; as the inhabitants will undoubtedly carry off as many of them as they could, and he had neither hussars nor dragoons to force them back again. And as to the preserving any conquests he might make, (of which the Duke had dropped some hints,) he observed that every place which was not impregnable to him, with such small force, must be untenable by him. On the whole, he engaged for nothing but obedience; he promised no success; he professed absolute ignorance with regard to every circumstance of the undertaking; he even could not fix on any particular undertaking; and yet he lay under positive orders to sail with the first fair wind, to approach the unknown coast, march through the unknown country, and attack the unknown cities of the most potent nation of the universe.

Meanwhile, Admiral Anson, who had put into Plymouth, and had been detained there by the same contrary winds, which still prevailed, had a conversation with the General and Admiral on the subject of their enterprise. He told them, that he remembered to have once casually heard from Mr. Hume, member for Southwark,

that he had been at L'Orient, and that, though it be very strong by sea, it is not so by land. Though Mr. Hume, the gentleman mentioned, be bred to a mercantile profession, not to war, and though the intelligence received from him was only casual, imperfect, and by second-hand, yet it gave pleasure to the Admiral and General, as it afforded them a faint glimmering ray in their present obscurity and ignorance; and they accordingly resolved to follow it. They wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, September the 3d, that 'twas to L'Orient they intended to bend their course, as soon as the wind offered. To remedy the ignorance of the coast and want of pilots, as far as possible, Commodore Cotes in the Ruby, together with Captain Stewart in the Hastings, and a sloop and tender, was immediately despatched by the Admiral to view Port L'Orient and all the places near it, so far as might regard the safe approach and anchorage of the ships. The ignorance of the country, and want of guides, was a desperate evil, for which the General could provide no remedy. But as the wind still continued contrary to the fleet and transports, though single ships of war might work their way against it, the General had occasion to see farther alterations made by the ministry in their project of an invasion.

The Duke of Newcastle, who had before informed the General that, if he could establish himself on any part of the coast of France, two battalions of the Guards, and General Huske's regiment, should be despatched after him, now says, (Sept. 3,) that these three battalions have got immediate orders to follow him. He farther adds, that if the General finds it impracticable to make any descent on the coast of Brittany, or higher up in the Bay of Biscay, he would probably find, on his return, some intelligence sent him, by the reinforcement, with regard to the coast of Normandy. Next day the Duke changes his mind, and sends immediately this intelligence with regard to the coast of Normandy, and a plan for annoying the French on that quarter, proposed by Major Macdonald; and to this plan he seems entirely to give the preference to the other, of making an attempt on the western coast of France, to which he had before confined the Admiral and General. They considered the plan, and conversed with Major Macdonald, who came down to Plymouth a few days after. They found that this plan had been given in some years before, and was not in the least calculated for the present expedition, but required a body of cavalry as an essential point towards its execution; an advantage of which the General was entirely destitute. They found that Major Macdonald had had so few opportunities of improving himself in the art of war, that it would be dangerous, without farther information,

to follow his plan in any military operations. They found that he pretended only to know the strength of the town, and nature of the country, in that province, but had never acquainted himself with the sea-coast, or pitched upon any proper place for disembarkation. They considered that a very considerable step had been already taken towards the execution of the other project on the coast of Brittany, viz. the sending Commodore Cotes to inspect and sound the coast; and that the same step must now be taken anew, in so late a season, with regard to the coast of Normandy. They thought that, if their whole operations were to begin, an attempt on the western coast was preferable, chiefly because of its remoteness from the Flanders' army, which must increase and spread the alarm, if the country were really so defenceless as was believed. They represented all those reasons to the Secretary; but at the same time expressed their intentions of remaining at Plymouth till they should receive his majesty's positive orders with regard to the enterprise on which they were to engage.

The Duke immediately despatched a messenger, with full powers to them to go whithersoever they pleased. During this interval, the General was obliged, to his great regret, to remain in a manner wholly inactive. Plymouth was so remote a place, that it was not to be expected he could there get any proper intelligence. He was bound up by his orders to such inviolable secrecy, that he could not make any inquiries for it, or scarce receive it, if offered. The Secretary had sent Major Macdonald, and one Cooke, captain of a privateer, who, 'twas found, could be of no manner of service in this undertaking. These, he said, were the only persons he could find in London that pretended to know any thing of the coast of France, as if the question had been with regard to the coast of Japan or of California. The General desired to have maps of France, chiefly of Gascony and Brittany. He receives only a map of Gascony, together with one of Normandy. No map of Brittany; none of France; he is obliged to set out on so important an enterprise without intelligence, without pilots, without guides, without any map of the country to which he was bound, except a common map, on a small scale, of the kingdom of France, which his Aid-de-camp had been able to pick up in a shop at Plymouth. He represented all these difficulties to the ministry; he begged them not to flatter themselves with any success from a General who had such obstacles to surmount, and who must leave his conduct to the government of chance more than prudence. He was answered, that nothing was expected of him, but to land any where he pleased in France, to produce an alarm, and to return safe, with the fleet

and transports, to the British dominions. Though he was sensible that more would be expected by the people, yet he cheerfully despised their rash judgments, while he acted in obedience to orders, and in the prosecution of his duty. The fleet sailed from Plymouth on the 15th of September, and, after a short voyage of three days, arrived, in the evening of the 18th, off the island of Groa, where they found Commodore Cotes and Captain Stuart, who gave them an account of the success which they had met with in the survey of the coast near L'Orient. The place they had pitched on for landing, was ten miles from that town, at the mouth of the river of Quimperlay. They represented it as a flat open shore, with deep water: on these accounts a good landing-place for the troops, but a dangerous place for the ships to ride in, on account of the rocks with which it was every where surrounded, and the high swell which was thrown in, from the Bay of Biscay, by the west and south-west winds.

It was then about eight in the evening, a full moon and a clear sky, with a gentle breeze blowing in shore. The question was, whether to sail directly to the landing-place, or hold off till morning. The two officers who had surveyed the coast were divided in opinion: one recommended the former measure, the other suggested some scruples, by representing the dangerous rocks that lay on every side of them, and the ignorance of all the pilots with regard to their number and situation. The Admiral was determined, by these reasons, to agree to this opinion. The question seemed little important, as it regarded only a short delay; but really was of the utmost consequence, and was, indeed, the spring whence all the ill success in this expedition flowed.

The great age of Admiral Listock, as it increased his experience, should make us cautious of censuring his opinion in sea affairs, where he was allowed to have such consummate knowledge. But at the same time, it may beget a suspicion, that being now in the decline of life, he was thence naturally inclined rather to the prudent counsels which suit a concerted enterprise, than to the bold temerity which belongs to such hasty and blind undertakings. The unhappy consequences of this over-cautious measure immediately appeared. The Admiral had laid his account, that by a delay, which procured a greater safety to the fleet and transports, only four or five hours would be lost; but the wind changing in the morning, and blowing fresh off shore, all next day, and part of next night, was spent before the ships could reach the landing-place. Some of them were not able to reach it till two days after.

During this time, the fleet lay full in view of the coast, and pre-

parations were making in Port Louis, L'Orient, and over the whole country, for the reception of an enemy, who threatened them with so unexpected an invasion.

The force of France, either for offence or defence, consists chiefly in three different bodies of men: first, in a numerous veteran army, which was then entirely employed in Italy and on their frontiers, except some shattered regiments, which were dispersed about the country, for the advantage of recruiting, and of which there were two regiments of dragoons at that time in Brittany; secondly, in a regular and disciplined militia, with which all the fortified cities along the sea-coast were garrisoned, and many of the frontier towns, that seemed not to be threatened with any immediate attack. Some bodies of this militia had also been employed in the field with the regular troops, and had acquired honour, which gave spirits and courage to the rest: thirdly, in a numerous body of coast militia, or gardes-du-cote, amounting to near 200,000, ill armed and ill disciplined, formidable alone by their numbers; and in Brittany, by the ferocity of the inhabitants, esteemed of old and at present, the most warlike and least civilized of all the French peasants. Regular signals were concerted for the assembling of these forces, by alarm guns, flags, and fires; and in the morning of the 20th of September, by break of day, a considerable body of all these different kinds of troops, but chiefly of the last, amounting to above 3000 men, were seen upon the sea-shore to oppose the disembarkation of the British forces. A disposition, therefore, of ships and boats must be made for the regular landing of the army; and as the weather was then very blustering, and the wind blew almost off shore, this could not be effected till afternoon.

There appeared, in view of the fleet, three places which seemed proper for a disembarkation, and which were separated from each other either by a rising ground, or by a small arm of the sea. The French militia had posted themselves in the two places which lay nearest to L'Orient; and finding that they were not numerous enough to cover the whole, they left the third, which lay to the windward, almost wholly defenceless. The General ordered the boats to rendezvous opposite to this beach; and he saw the French troops march off from the next contiguous landing-place, and take post opposite to him. They placed themselves behind some sand-banks, in such a manner as to be entirely sheltered from the cannon of those English ships which covered the landing, while at the same time they could rush in upon the troops, as soon as their approach to the shore had obliged the ships to leave off firing.

The General remarked their plan of defence, and was determined

to disappoint them. He observed, that the next landing-place to the leeward was now empty; and that, though the troops which had been posted on the more distant beach had quitted their station, and were making a circuit round an arm of the sea, in order to occupy the place deserted by the others, they had not as yet reached it. He immediately seized the opportunity. He ordered his boats to row directly forward, as if he intended to land on the beach opposite to him; but while the enemy were expecting him to advance, he ordered the boats to turn, at a signal; and, making all the speed that both oars and sails could give them, to steer directly to the place deserted by the enemy. In order to render the disembarkation more safe, he had previously ordered two tenders to attack a battery, which had been placed on a mount towards the right, and which was well situated for annoying the boats on their approach. The tenders succeeded in chasing the French from their guns; the boats reached the shore before any of the French could be opposite to them. The soldiers landed, to the number of about six hundred men, and formed in an instant; immediately upon which the whole militia dispersed and fled up into the country. The English followed them regularly and in good order; prognosticating success to the enterprise from such a fortunate beginning.

There was a creek, or arm of the sea, dry at low water, which lay on the right hand of the landing-place, and through which ran the nearest road to L'Orient, and the only one fit for the march of troops, or the draught of cannon and heavy carriages. As it was then high water, the French runaways were obliged, by this creek, to make a circuit of some miles; and they thereby misled the general, who, justly concluding they would take shelter in that town, and having no other guides to conduct him, thought that, by following their footsteps, he would be led the readiest and shortest way to L'Orient. He detached, therefore, in pursuit of the flying militia, about a thousand men, under the command of Brigadier O'Farrel; who, after being harassed by some firing from the hedges, (by which Lieut.-Col. Erskine, Quarter-Master General, was dangerously wounded,) arrived that evening at Guidel, a village about a league distant from the landing-place. The general himself lay near the sea-shore, to wait for the landing of the rest of the forces. By break of day he led them up to join the brigadier at Guidel. He there learned from some peasants, taken prisoners, and who spoke the French language, (which few of the common people in Brittany are able to do,) that the road into which he had been led, by the reasons above specified, was the longest by four or five miles. He was also informed, what he had partly seen, that the road was very

dangerous and difficult, running through narrow lanes and defiles, betwixt high hedges, faced with stone walls, and bordered in many places with thick woods and brushes, where a very few disciplined and brave troops might stop a whole army; and where even a few, without discipline or bravery, might, by firing suddenly upon the forces, throw them into confusion.

In order to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the country, of which he and the whole army were utterly ignorant, he here divided the troops into two equal bodies, and marched them up to L'Orient, by two different roads, which were pointed out to him. The one part, which he himself conducted, passed without much molestation. The other, under Brigadier O'Farrel, was not so fortunate. Two "battalions of that detachment, Richbell's and Frampton's, partly from their want of experience, and partly from the terror naturally inspired into soldiers by finding themselves in a difficult country unknown both to themselves and leaders, and partly, perhaps, from accident, to which the courage of men is extremely liable, fell into confusion, before a handful of French peasants who fired at them from behind the hedges. Notwithstanding all the endeavours of the Brigadier, many of them threw down their arms, and ran away; others fired in confusion, and wounded each other; and if any regular forces had been present to take advantage of this disorder, the most fatal consequences might have ensued. And though they were at last led on, and joined the general that evening before L'Orient, the panic still remained in these two battalions afterwards, and communicated itself to others; kept the whole army in anxiety, even when they were not in danger, and threw a mighty damp on the expectations of success, conceived from this undertaking. L'Orient, lately a small village, now a considerable town, on the coast of Brittany, lies in the extremity of a fine bay, the mouth of which is very narrow, and guarded by the strong citadel of Port Louis. This town has become the centre of the French East India trade, the seat of the company established for that commerce, and the magazine whence they distribute the East India commodities. The great prizes made upon them by the English, during the course of the war, had given a check to this growing commerce; yet still the town was esteemed a valuable acquisition, were it only on account of the wealth it contained, and the store-houses of the company, a range of stately buildings, erected at public charge, both for use and ornament. The town itself is far from being strong. Two sides of it, which are not protected with water, are defended only with a plain wall, near thirty feet high, of no great thickness, and without any fosse or parapet. But the water which covers the

other two sides, rendered it impossible to be invested, and gave an opportunity for multitudes of people to throw themselves into it from every corner of that populous country. And though these, for want of discipline, could not be trusted in the field against regular forces, yet became they of great use in a defence behind walls, by throwing up works, erecting batteries, and digging trenches, to secure (what was sufficient) for a few days, a weak town against a small and ill-provided army. The East India Company had numbers of cannon in their magazines, and had there erected a school of engineers, for the service of their ships and settlements; the vessels in the harbour supplied them with more cannon, and with seamen accustomed to their management and use; and whatever was wanting, either in artillery or warlike stores, could easily be brought by water from Port Louis, with which the town of L'Orient kept always an open communication.

But as these advantages, though great, require both a sufficient presence of mind, and some time, to be employed against an enemy, 'tis not improbable, that if the admiral had been supplied with proper pilots, and the general with proper guides, which could have led the English immediately upon the coast, and to the town, the very terror of so unexpected an invasion would have rendered the inhabitants incapable of resistance, and made them surrender at discretion. The want of these advantages had already lost two days; and more time must yet be consumed, before they could so much as make the appearance of an attack. Cannon was wanting, and the road by which the army had marched, was absolutely unfit for the conveyance of them. The general, therefore, having first despatched an officer and a party to reconnoitre the country, and find a nearer and better road, September 22d, went himself next day to the sea-shore, for the same purpose, and also in order to concert with the admiral the proper method of bringing up cannon; as almost all the horses in the country, which are extremely weak and of a diminutive size, had been driven away by the peasants. Accordingly, a road was found, much nearer, though still ten miles of length; and much better, though easily rendered impassable by rainy weather, as was afterwards experienced.

A council of war was held on board the Princessa, consisting of the admiral and general, Brigadier O'Farrel and Commodore Cotes. The engineers, Director-General Armstrong, and Captain Watson, who had surveyed the town of L'Orient, being called in, were asked their opinion with regard to the practicability of an attempt on it, together with the time, and artillery, and ammunition, requisite for that purpose. Their answer was, that with two twelve

pounders, and a ten inch mortar, planted on the spot which they had pitched on for erecting a battery, they engaged either to make a practicable breach in the walls, or with cartridges, bombs, and red-hot balls, destroy the town, by laying it in ashes in twenty-four hours. Captain Chalmers, the captain of the artillery, who had not then seen the town, was of the same opinion, from their description of it, provided the battery was within the proper distance. Had the king's orders been less positive for making an attempt on some part of the coast of France, yet such flattering views offered by men who promised what lay within the sphere of their own profession, must have engaged the attention of the admiral and general, and induced them to venture on a much more hazardous and difficult undertaking. 'Twas accordingly agreed that four twelve pounders, and a ten inch mortar, together with three field-pieces, should be drawn up to the camp by sailors, in order to make, with still greater assurance, the attempt, whose success seemed so certain to the engineers. These pieces of artillery, with the stores demanded, notwithstanding all difficulties, were drawn to the camp in two days, except two twelve pounders, which arrived not till the day afterwards. A third part of the sailors of the whole fleet, together with all the marines, were employed in this drudgery; the admiral gave all assistance in his power to the general; and the public, in one instance, saw that it was not impossible for land and sea officers to live in harmony together, and concur in promoting the success of an enterprise.

The general, on his arrival in the camp, found the officer returned whom he had sent to summon the town of L'Orient. By his information, it appeared that the inhabitants were so much alarmed by the suddenness of this incursion, and the terror of a force, which their fears magnified, as to think of surrendering, though upon conditions, which would have rendered the conquest of no avail to their enemies. The inhabitants insisted upon an absolute security to their houses and goods; the East India Company to their magazines and store-houses; and the garrison, consisting of about seven hundred regular militia and troops, besides a great number of irregulars, demanded a liberty of marching out with all the honours of war. A weak town that opened its gates on such conditions was not worth the entering; since it must immediately be abandoned, leaving only to its conquerors the shame of their own folly, and perhaps the reproach of treachery. The general, therefore, partly trusting to the promise of the engineers, and partly desirous of improving the advantages gained by the present danger, when the deputies arrived next day, September 23d, from the governor, from the

town, and from the East India Company, refused to receive any articles but those from the governor, who commanded in the name of his most Christian majesty. He even refused liberty to the garrison to march out; well knowing that, as the town was not invested, they could take that liberty whenever they pleased.

Meanwhile, every accident concurred to render the enterprise of the English abortive. Some deserters got into the town, who informed the garrison of the true force of the English, which, conjecturing from the greatness and number of the ships, they had much magnified. Even this small body diminished daily, from the fatigue of excessive duty, and from the great rains that began to fall. Scarce three thousand were left to do duty, which still augmented the fatigue to the few that remained; especially when joined to the frequent alarms, that the unaccountable panic they were struck with made but too frequent. Rains had so spoilt the roads as to render it impracticable to bring up any heavier cannon, or more of the same calibre, so long a way, by the mere force of seamen. But what, above all things, made the enterprise appear desperate, was the discovery of the ignorance of the engineers, chiefly of the director-general, who in the whole course of his proceedings appeared neither to have skill in contrivance, nor order and diligence in execution. His own want of capacity and experience, made his projects of no use; his blind obstinacy rendered him incapable of making use of the capacity of others. Though the general offered to place and support the battery wherever the engineer thought proper, he chose to set it above six hundred yards from the wall, where such small cannon could do no manner of execution. He planted it at so oblique an angle to the wall that the ball thrown from the largest cannon must have recoiled, without making any impression. He trusted much to the red-hot balls, with which he promised to lay the town in ashes in twenty-four hours; yet, by his negligence, or that of others, the furnace with which these balls were to be heated, was forgot. After the furnace was brought, he found that the bellows, and other implements necessary for the execution of that work, were also left on board the store-ships. With great difficulty, and infinite pains, ammunition and artillery stores were drawn up from the sea-shore in tumbrels. He was totally ignorant, till some days after, that he had along with him ammunition wagons, which would have much facilitated this labour. His orders to the officers of the train were so confused, or so ill obeyed, that no ammunition came regularly up to the camp, to serve the few cannon and the mortars that played upon the town. Not only fascines, piquets, and every thing necessary for the battery, were supplied

him beyond his demand; but even workmen, notwithstanding the great fatigue and small numbers of the army. These workmen found no addition to their fatigue in obeying his orders. He left them often unemployed, for want of knowing in what business he should occupy them.

Meanwhile the French garrison, being so weakly attacked, had leisure to prepare for a defence, and make proper use of their great number of workmen, if not of soldiers, and the nearness and plenty of their military stores. By throwing up earth in the inside of the wall, they had planted a great many cannon, some of a large calibre, and opened six batteries against one that played upon them from the English. The distance alone of the besiegers' battery, made these cannon of the enemy do less execution; but that same distance rendered the attack absolutely ineffectual. Were the battery brought nearer, to a hundred paces for instance, 'twould be requisite to make it communicate with the camp by trenches and a covered way, to dig which was the work of some days for so small an army. During this time, the besieged, foreseeing the place to which the attack must be directed, could easily fortify it by retrenchments in the inside of the wall; and planting ten cannon to one, could silence the besiegers' feeble battery in a few hours. They would not even have had leisure to make a breach in the thin wall, which first discovered itself; and that breach, if made, could not possibly serve to any purpose. Above fifteen thousand men, completely armed by the East India Company, and brave while protected by cannon and ramparts, still stood in opposition to three thousand, discouraged with fatigue, with sickness, and with despair of ever succeeding in so unequal a contest.

A certain foreign writer, more anxious to tell his stories in an entertaining manner than to assure himself of their reality, has endeavoured to put this expedition in a ridiculous light; but as there is not one circumstance of his narration, which has truth in it, or even the least appearance of truth, it would be needless to lose time in refuting it. With regard to the prejudices of the public, a few questions may suffice.

Was the attempt altogether impracticable from the beginning? The general neither proposed it, nor planned it, nor approved it, nor answered for its success. Did the disappointment proceed from want of expedition? He had no pilots, guides, nor intelligence, afforded him; and could not possibly provide himself in any of these advantages, so necessary to all military operations. Were the engineers blamable? This has always been considered

as a branch of military knowledge, distinct from that of a commander, and which is altogether intrusted to those to whose profession it peculiarly belongs. By his vigour in combating the vain terrors spread amongst the troops, and by his prudence in timely desisting from a fruitless enterprise, the misfortune was confined merely to a disappointment, without any loss or any dishonour to the British arms. Commanders, from the situation of affairs, have had opportunities of acquiring more honour; yet there is no one whose conduct, in every circumstance, could be more free from reproach. On the first of October, the fleet sailed out of Quimperlay Road, from one of the most dangerous situations that so large a fleet had ever lain in, at so late a season, and in so stormy a sea as the Bay of Biscay. The reflection on this danger had been no inconsiderable cause of hastening the re-embarkation of the troops. And the more so, that the secretary had given express orders to the admiral not to bring the fleet into any hazard. The prudence of the hasty departure appeared the more visibly the very day the fleet sailed, when a violent storm arising from the south west, it was concluded, that if the ships had been lying at anchor on the coast, many of them must have necessarily been driven ashore, and wrecked on the rocks that surrounded them. The fleet was dispersed, and six transports being separated from the rest, went immediately for England, carrying with them about eight hundred of the forces. The rest put into Quiberon Bay, and the general landed his small body on the peninsula of that name. By erecting a battery of some guns on the narrow neck of land, which joins the peninsula to the continent, he rendered his situation almost impregnable, while he saw the fleet riding secure in his neighbourhood, in one of the finest bays in the world.

The industry and spirit of the general supported both himself and the army against all these disadvantages, while there was the smallest prospect of success. But his prudence determined him to abandon it, when it appeared altogether desperate.

The engineers, seeing no manner of effect from their shells and red-hot balls, and sensible that 'twas impossible either to make a breach from a battery, erected at so great a distance, or to place the battery nearer, under such a superiority of French cannon, at last unanimously brought a report to the general, that they had no longer any hope of success; and that even all the ammunition, which, with infinite labour, had been brought, was expended: no prospect remained of being farther supplied, on account of the broken roads, which lay between them and the fleet. The council of war held in consequence of this report, balanced the reasons for continuing

or abandoning the enterprise, if men can be said to balance where they find nothing on the one side but an extreme desire to serve their king and country, and on the other every maxim of war and prudence. They unanimously agreed to abandon the attempt, and return on board the transports. The whole troops were accordingly re-embarked by the 28th of September, with the loss of near twenty men killed and wounded, on the whole enterprise.

APPENDIX B.

LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT.[1]

I.—LETTERS FROM MONTESQUIEU TO HUME.[2]

(1.)

J'ai reçu Monsieur, comme une chose très précieuse, la belle lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire au sujet de mon ouvrage. Elle est remplie de réflexions si judicieuses et si sensées, que je ne sçaurois vous dire à quel point j'en ai été charmé. Ce que vous dites sur la forme dont les jurés prononcent en Angleterre, ou en Ecosse, m'a surtout fait un grand plaisir, et l'endroit de mon livre où j'ai traité cette matière est peut-être celui qui m'a fait le plus de peine, et où j'ai le plus souvent changé. Ce que j'avois fait, parce-que je n'avois trouvé personne qui eut la-dessus des idées aussi nettes, que vous avez. Mais c'est assez parler de mon livre que j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter. J'aime mieux vous parler d'une belle dissertation où vous donnez une beaucoup plus grande influence aux causes morales qu'aux causes physiques—et il m'a paru, autant que je suis capable d'en juger, que ce sujet est traité à fond, quelque difficile qu'il soit à traiter, et écrit de main de maître, et rempli d'idées et de réflexions très neuves. Nous commençâmes aussi à lire—M. Stuart et moi—un autre ouvrage de vous où vous maltraitez un peu l'ordre ecclésiastique. Vous croyez bien que Monsr. Stuart et moi n'avons pas pu entièrement vous approuver —nous nous sommes contentés de vous admirer. Nous ne crûmes pas que ces Messieurs furent tels, mais nous trouvâmes fort bonnes les raisons que vous donnez pour qu'ils dussent être tels. M. Stuart m'a fait un grand plaisir en me faisant espérer que je trouverois à Paris une partie de ces beaux ouvrages. J'ai l'honneur, Monsieur,

[1] From the MSS. R.S.E.

[2] See *antea*, p. 304.

de vous en remercier, et d'être avec les sentimens de la plus parfaite estime, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

MONTESQUIEU.

A Bordeaux, ce 19 *May*, 1749.

(2.)

Monsieur j'ai reçu la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire du 16 de Juillet, et il ne m'a été possible de la lire qu'aujourdhui, à cause d'une grande fluxion sur les yeux et que n'ayant point actuellement de secrétaire Anglais je ne pouvois me la faire lire. J'étois prêt à y faire réponse quand Mr. Le Mosnier est entré chez moi, et m'a parlé de l'honneur qu'on veut faire à mon livre en Ecosse de l'y imprimer, et m'a dit ce que vous m'avez déjà appris par votre lettre. Je suis très obligé à vous Monsieur et à Monsieur Alexandre, de la peine que vous avez prise. Je suis convenu avec M. Le Mosnier que je ferais faire une copie des corrections que j'ai envoiées en Angleterre, et à Paris, de la première édition de Genève, en 2 volumes in 4to qui est très fautive, et qu'il se chargeroit de les envoyer. J'ai reçu Monsieur, les exemplaires de vos beaux ouvrages que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer, et j'ai lu avec un très grand plaisir l'essay sur l'esprit humain, qui ne peut partir que d'un esprit extrêmement philosophique. Tout ceci est rempli de belles idées, et je vous remercie du plaisir que la lecture m'en a fait; à l'égard de la citation des Lettres Persanes il vaut autant que mon nom y soit que celui d'un autre, et cela n'est d'aucune conséquence.

La réputation de Monsieur le Docteur Midleton est certainement venue jusqu'à nous. Notior ut jam sit canibus non Delia nostris, et j'espère bien me procurer l'avantage de lire les ouvrages dont vous me parlez. Je sçais que Mr. de Midleton est un homme éminent. J'ai Monsieur l'honneur d'être, &c.

A Paris ce 3 *7bre*, 1749.

Je vous prie Monsieur, de vouloir bien faire mes compliments très humbles à Mons. Stewart: il fairoit bien de venir nous revoir cet automne prochain.

(3.)

J'ai Monsieur reçu l'honneur de votre lettre avec la postille qui y est jointe, et j'ai de plus reçu un exemplaire de vos excellentes compositions par la voie de Milord Morton. Mr. de Jouquart qui a formé le dessein de traduire l'ourage de Monsr. Wallace, me dit hier qu'il traduiroit aussi le vôtre sur le nombre des peuples chez les anciennes

nations. Cela dépendra du succès qu'aura sa traduction qui est la première qu'il ait faite. Il est certain qu'il a tous les talents qu'il faut pour s'en acquitter, et je ne doute pas que le public ne l'encourage à continuer. Le public qui admirera les deux ouvrages, n'admirera pas moins deux amis qui font céder d'une manière si noble les petits intérêts de l'esprit aux intérêts de l'amitié; et pour moi, je regarderai comme un très grand bonheur, si je puis me flatter d'avoir quelque part dans cette amitié. Jai l'honneur d'être, &c.

Paris, ce 13 *Juillet*, 1753.

II.—LETTERS FROM THE ABBÉ LE BLANC TO HUME.

Referred to in vol. i. p. 366, *and* p. 408.

(1.)

Monsieur, — La traduction de vos discours politiques, que j'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer, est la preuve la plus éclatante que je pouvois vous donner de l'estime que j'en fais; vous en serez peut-être plus content si j'avois été à portée de profiter de vos lumières. Je vous prie, et votre intérêt s'y trouve comme le mien, de me faire la grâce de la lire avec attention, et de m'avertir des endroits, ou malgré toute l'attention que j'y ai apportée, j'aurois pu m'écarter de votre sens. J'en profiterai à la première édition, ainsi que des remarques, changements, ou additions, qu'il vous plaira me communiquer, soit à l'occasion de vos discours, soit sur les autres ouvrages Anglois dont je parle dans mes notes.

Je vous prie encore Monsieur que ce soit le plus tôt qu'il vous sera possible, car il est bon de vous dire que cette traduction, grâce à l'excellence de l'original, se débite ici comme un Roman; c'est tout dire, notre goût pour les futilités vous est connu; il vous étoit réservé de nous y faire renoncer, pour nous occuper des matières les plus dignes d'exercer les esprits raisonnables. Le Libraire m'avertit qu'il sera bientôt tems de penser à la seconde édition. J'attendrai votre réponse pour l'enrichir de vos remarques qui feront que celle-ci sera reçue du public avec encore plus d'applaudissements.

Je profite de cette occasion pour vous offrir une amitié qui vous sera, peut-être, inutile, et vous demander la vôtre que je serois très flatté d'obtenir. Il semble que l'auteur et le traducteur sont faits pour être liés ensemble: il est à présumer qui celui que traduit un ouvrage a d'avance ou du moins épousé la façon de parler de celui qui l'a fait. J'ai trouvé dans vos discours un politique Philosophe, et un Philosophe citoyen. Je n'ai moi-même donné aucun ouvrage qui ne porte ce double caractère, et je me flatte que vous le trouverez

dans les Lettres d'un François, si par hazard elles vous sont connues.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec les sentiments d'estime dont je viens de vous donner des témoignages publics, et cette sorte de respect que je n'ai que pour quelques Philosophes tels que vous. Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

L'Abbé Le Blanc, Historiographe des Bâtiments du Roy de France.

De Paris, le 25th Août, 1754.

(2.)

Monsieur, — La traduction de vos discours politiques est la première que j'ai donnée au public; et l'utilité que j'ai cru que ma patrie en pouvoit retirer, est l'unique motif que m'ait déterminé à l'entreprendre. Je n'ose me répondre que vous la trouverez telle que vous l'espérez. C'est à moi à vous demander votre indulgence pour les fautes que vous y trouverez, et à vous prier de me communiquer vos remarques sur des notes que j'ai cru y devoir adjouter. Je vous promets de corriger avec soumission les erreurs que vos m'y ferez apercevoir. A la fin du 2d vol. j'ai donné une notice des meilleurs ouvrages Anglois que j'ai consultés, sur les matières du commerce; j'ai hazardé de porter mon jugement sur chacun de ceux dont j'ai parlé. Je le rectifierai sur vos lumières, si vous voulez bien me les communiquer. Si j'en ai omis quelqu'un d'important, je vous prie de me le faire connoître, et de me dire vous-même, qui êtes un si excellent juge, ce que l'on en doit penser. J'enricherai la 2 Edition de tout ce dont vous voudrez bien me faire part.

A l'égard de votre histoire de la Grande Bretagne que vous m'annoncez, ce ne sera plus simplement comme votre admirateur mais comme votre ami Monsieur, que j'en entreprendrai la traduction, et je ferai de mon mieux pour qu'elle perde le moins qu'il est possible. J'aime votre façon de penser, et je suis familiarisé avec votre stile; si la matière exige qu'il soit plus élevé je tacherai d'y atteindre. Mais pour que je puisse entreprendre cette traduction avec succès, il faut s'il est possible, que vous retardiez à Londres au moins d'un mois la publication de votre ouvrage, et que vous me l'envoyez tout de suite par la poste, addressé sans autre enveloppe à Mr. Jannes, Chevalier de l'ordre du Roi, Controlleur Général des Postes à Paris. Nous avons ici une foule d'écrivains médiocres, qui sans savoir ni l'Anglois ni le François même, sont à l'affût de tout ce qui s'imprime chez vous, et qui à l'aide d'un dictionnaire vous massacreront impitoyablement. On nous a donné ainsi plusieurs bons ouvrages, et entre autres la dissertation de M. Wallace dont

il n'est pas possible de supporter la lecture en François. Pour faire de pareille besogne, il ne faut pas beaucoup de tems à ces Messieurs là. Ils travaillent vîte, parce qu'ils travaillent *fami potius quam famæ*. Si je n'ai pas du tems devant eux, je serai prévenu, et si je le suis, je serai obligé d'abandonner l'ouvrage. Je ne vous parle pas des traducteurs de Hollande qui sont encore plus mauvais s'il est possible. Cette fois-ci je veux faire un office d'amitié, je vous prie de me mettre à portée de le bien faire. Vos discours Politiques vous ont, comme je m'y attendois, donné ici la plus haute réputation, dès que votre histoire paroîtra, un libraire la fera venir par la poste, et mettra ses ouvriers après, à moins que vous ne m'accordiez la grâce que je vous demande. Alors on saura que je la traduis, et je suis sûr que ces messieurs me laisseront faire.

J'ai encore à vous apprendre, monsieur, que le succès de vos Discours Politiques ne fait qu'augmenter tous les jours, et que tout retentit de vos Éloges. Nos ministres même n'en sont pas moins satisfaits que le public. Mr. le Comte d'Argenson, Mr. Le Maréchal de Noailles, en un mot tous ceux qui ont ici part au gouvernement ont parlé de votre ouvrage, comme d'un des meilleurs qui ayent jamais été faits sur ces matières. J'ai été obligé de céder mon exemplaire à un d'entre eux; ainsi je vous prie de m'en adresser un par la même voie que je vous ai indiquée, la poste après que vous m'aurez envoyé le I. vol. de votre histoire, d'autant plus que les additions et corrections dont vous m'avez fait part se rapportent à la 3e edition qui je crois se trouveroit difficilement à Paris.

(3.)

Monsieur, — Je vous avois promis, et je m'étois flatté de pouvoir consacrer mes veilles à traduire aussi votre admirable Histoire de l'infortunée Maison de Stewart. Les obstacles les plus puissants, ceux-mêmes qui ôtent à l'esprit cette liberté sans laquelle on ne fait rien de bien, voyages, affaires, disgrâces, maladies—tout s'est opposé à l'exécution d'un projet qui rioit si fort à mon imagination et dont l'exécution ne pouroit que me faire honneur.

A ce défaut j'ai prêté à un de mes amis, homme d'esprit et laborieux, le premier volume que vous avez eu la bonté de m'envoyer. Il l'a traduit et le rendra public au commencement de l'hiver prochain.

J'ai de même que tous ceux qui savent ici l'Anglois, le plus grand empressement de lire votre second volume. J'en ferai le même usage que du premier.

Je vous avois annoncé que vos discours Politiques feroient parmi nous le même effet que *L'Esprit des Loix*. L'évènement m'a justifié, non seulement ils jouissent parmi nous de cette haute

réputation qu'ils méritent, mais ils ont donné lieu à un grand nombre d'autres ouvrages plus ou moins èstimables et qui la plus part n'ont d'original que la forme. Vous en trouverez le catalogue à la suite d'une troisième édition de ma traduction que je vais donner incessamment.

Il vient d'en paroître un qui fait ici un grand bruit, et que je n'ai garde de confondre avec tous ceux dont je viens de parler. Il est intitulé, L'Ami des Hommes ou Traité de La Population. L'Auteur est un génie hardi, original, qui comme Montaigne se laisse aller à ses idées, les expose sans orgueil, sans modestie; il ne suit ni ordre ni méthode; mais son ouvrage, plein d'excellentes choses, respire le bien de l'humanité et de la patrie. Il prêche l'agriculture, et foudroye la finance. Il combat votre système sur le luxe, mais avec les égards élevés à la superiorité de vos lumières. Il m'a remis un exemplaire de son ouvrage, qu'il me prie de vous présenter comme un tribut de son estime et de la reconnoissance qu'il vous doit, pour l'utilité qu'il a tirée de vos Discours Politiques. Il ne demande pas mieux que d'être éclairé et par la noblesse des sentiments et la politesse de la conduite. Je ne crains pas de le dire. L'adversaire est digne de vous. C'est *Monsieur le Marquis de Mirabeau*, qui est tel qu'il paroît dans son livre—c'est à dire un des plus extraordinaires des hommes qu'il y ait en quelque pays que ce soit. Je vous prie Monsieur de m'indiquer une voie sûre pour vous faire parvenir son ouvrage.

(4.)

Dresde, le 25 Dec. 1754.

J'ai vu ici la traduction de vos Discours Politiques imprimée en Hollande; elle ne se peut pas lire; vous souffririez vous, Monsieur, de vous voir ainsi défiguré. Le Traducteur quel qu'il soit ne sait constamment ni l'Anglois ni le François. C'est probablement un de ces auteurs qui travaillent à la foire pour les libraires de Hollande, et dont les ouvrages bons ou mauvais se débitent aux foires de Leipsig et de Francfort. Les bibliothèques de ce pays ci sont remplies de livres François qui n'ont jamais été et ne seront jamais connus en France. Cette traduction passe ici pour être d'un Mr. Mauvillon de Leipsic dont le métier est de faire des livres François pour L'Allemagne, et d'enseigner ce qu'il ne sait —c'est à dire, votre langue et la nôtre. Ce qu'il y a de Saxons lettrés qui les possèdent l'une ou l'autre, et qui s'intéressent au bien de leur pays, connoissent l'excellence de votre ouvrage, me pressent de faire imprimer à Dresde même la seconde édition de ma traduction, et je pourrois bien me rendre à leur avis. Je n'attends plus que

votre réponse pour me décider. Quelque part qu'elle se fasse, je tâcherai de faire en sorte qu'elle soit belle et correcte.

(5.)

MONSIEUR,—Il y a à peu près un an que notre commerce épistolaire a commencé, et j'ai grand regret que par des contretems de tout espèce il ait été sitôt interrompu. Vous m'avez donné trop de preuves de votre politesse pour que je ne sois pas à présent convaincu que vous n'avez reçu aucune des lettres que je vous ai écrites de Dresde, et que j'avois essayé de vous faire passer par la voie de votre ambassadeur à cette cour. Prêt à quitter la Saxe, je vous écrivis encor de Leïpzic, pour vous rendre compte de mon séjour en ce pays, et vous dire que la dissipation où j'y avois vécu forcément, ne m'avoit pas permis d'avancer beaucoup dans la traduction de votre histoire de la malheureuse famille des Stuarts. J'ai depuis été en Hollande, et, comme je l'avois prévu j'ai appris qu'un de ces auteurs, qui travaillent à la fois aux gages des libraires qui les employent, en avoit fait une de son coté, qui étoit toute prête à paroître. Vous pouvez aisément juger du découragement où une pareille nouvelle m'a jetté. La manufacture des livres de Hollande fait réellement grand tort à notre littérature Françoise. On y employe à traduire un excellent ouvrage des gens qui ne seroient bons qu'à travailler à la fabrique du papier.

APPENDIX C.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE POEMS OF OSSIAN.

I. — CORRESPONDENCE.

(1.)

HUME *to* ——.

Edinburgh, August 16, 1760.

SIR,—I am not surprised to find by your letter, that Mr. Gray should have entertained suspicions with regard to the authenticity of these fragments of our Highland poetry. The first time I was shown the copies of some of them in manuscript, by our friend John Home, I was inclined to be a little incredulous on that head; but Mr. Home removed my scruples, by informing me of the manner in which he procured them from Mr. Macpherson, the translator.

These two gentlemen were drinking the waters together at Moffat last autumn, when their conversation fell upon Highland poetry, which Mr. Macpherson extolled very highly. Our friend, who knew him to be a good scholar, and a man of taste, found his curiosity excited, and asked whether he had ever translated any of them. Mr. Macpherson replied, that he never had attempted any such thing; and doubted whether it was possible to transfuse such beauties into our language; but, for Mr. Home's satisfaction, and in order to give him a general notion of the strain of that wild poetry, he would endeavour to turn one of them into English. He accordingly brought him one next day, which our friend was so much pleased with, that he never ceased soliciting Mr. Macpherson, till he insensibly produced that small volume which has been published.

After this volume was in every body's hands, and universally admired, we heard every day new reasons, which put the authenticity, not the great antiquity which the translator ascribes to them, beyond all question; for their antiquity is a point, which must be ascertained by reasoning; though the arguments he employs seem very probable and convincing. But certain it is, that these poems are in every body's mouth in the Highlands, have been handed down from father to son, and are of an age beyond all memory and tradition.

In the family of every Highland chieftain, there was anciently retained a bard, whose office was the same with that of the Greek rhapsodists; and the general subject of the poems which they recited was the wars of Fingal; an epoch no less remarkable among them, than the wars of Troy among the Greek poets. This custom is not even yet altogether abolished: the bard and piper are esteemed the most honourable offices in a chieftain's family, and these two characters are frequently united in the same person. Adam Smith, the celebrated Professor in Glasgow, told me that the piper of the Argyleshire militia repeated to him all those poems which Mr. Macpherson has translated, and many more of equal beauty. Major Mackay, Lord Reay's brother, also told me that he remembers them perfectly; as likewise did the Laird of Macfarlane, the greatest antiquarian whom we have in this country, and who insists so strongly on the historical truth, as well as on the poetical beauty of these productions. I could add the Laird and Lady Macleod to these authorities, with many more, if these were not sufficient, as they live in different parts of the Highlands, very remote from each other, and they could only be acquainted with poems that had become in a manner national works, and had gradually spread themselves into every mouth, and imprinted themselves on every memory.

Every body in Edinburgh is so convinced of this truth, that we have endeavoured to put Mr. Macpherson on a way of procuring us more of these wild flowers. He is a modest, sensible, young man, not settled in any living, but employed as a private tutor in Mr. Grahame of Balgowan's family, a way of life which he is not fond of. We have, therefore, set about a subscription of a guinea or two guineas a-piece, in order to enable him to quit that family, and undertake a mission into the Highlands, where he hopes to recover more of these fragments. There is, in particular, a country surgeon somewhere in Lochaber, who, he says, can recite a great number of them, but never committed them to writing; as indeed the orthography of the Highland language is not fixed, and the natives have always employed more the sword than the pen. This surgeon has by heart the Epic poem mentioned by Mr. Macpherson in his Preface; and as he is somewhat old, and is the only person living that has it entire, we are in the more haste to recover a monument, which will certainly be regarded as a curiosity in the republic of letters.

I own that my first and chief objection to the authenticity of these fragments, was not on account of the noble and even tender strokes which they contain; for these are the offspring of genius and passion in all countries; I was only surprised at the regular plan which appears in some of these pieces, and which seems to be the work of a more cultivated age. None of the specimens of barbarous poetry known to us, the Hebrew, Arabian, or any other, contain this species of beauty; and if a regular epic poem, or even any thing of that kind, nearly regular, should also come from that rough climate or uncivilized people, it would appear to me a phenomenon altogether unaccountable.

I remember Mr. Macpherson told me, that the heroes of this Highland epic were not only, like Homer's heroes, their own butchers, bakers, and cooks, but also their own shoemakers, carpenters, and smiths. He mentioned an incident which put this matter in a remarkable light. A warrior had the head of his spear struck off in battle; upon which he immediately retires behind the army, where a large forge was erected, makes a new one, hurries back to the action, pierces his enemy, while the iron, which was yet red-hot, hisses in the wound. This imagery you will allow to be singular, and so well imagined, that it would have been adopted by Homer, had the manners of the Greeks allowed him to have employed it.

I forgot to mention, as another proof of the authenticity of these poems, and even of the reality of the adventures contained in them, that the names of the heroes, Fingal, Oscar, Osur, Oscan, Dermid,

are still given in the Highlands to large mastiffs, in the same manner as we affix to them the names of Cæsar, Pompey, Hector, or the French that of Marlborough.

It gives me pleasure to find, that a person of so fine a taste as Mr. Gray approves of these fragments; as it may convince us, that our fondness of them is not altogether founded on national prepossessions, which, however, you know to be a little strong. The translation is elegant; but I made an objection to the author, which I wish you would communicate to Mr. Gray, that we may judge of the justness of it. There appeared to me many verses in his prose, and all of them in the same measure with Mr. Shenstone's famous ballad:

> "Ye shepherds so cheerful and gay,
> Whose flocks never carelessly roam, &c."

Pray, ask Mr. Gray, whether he made the same remark, &c. and whether he thinks it a blemish. Yours most sincerely, &c.[1]

(2.)

HUME *to* DR. BLAIR.

Lisle St. Leicester Fields, 19th Sept. 1763.

DEAR SIR, — I live in a place where I have the pleasure of frequently hearing justice done to your Dissertation; but never heard it mentioned in a company where some one person or other did not express his doubts with regard to the authenticity of the poems which are its subject; and I often hear them totally rejected with disdain and indignation, as a palpable and most impudent forgery. This opinion has, indeed, become very prevalent among the men of letters in London; and I can foresee, that in a few years the poems, if they continue to stand on their present footing, will be thrown aside, and will fall into final oblivion. It is in vain to say that their beauty will support them, independent of their authenticity. No; that beauty is not so much to the general taste as to ensure you of this event; and if people be once disgusted with the idea of a forgery, they are thence apt to entertain a more disadvantageous notion of the excellency of the production itself. The absurd pride and caprice of Macpherson himself, who scorns, as he pretends, to satisfy any body that doubts his veracity, has tended much to confirm this general scepticism; and I must own, for my own part, that, though I have had many particular reasons to believe these poems genuine, more than it is possible for any Englishman of

[1] *European Magazine*, May, 1784, p. 327.

letters to have, yet I am not entirely without my scruples on that head. You think that the internal proofs in favour of the poems are very convincing; so they are: but there are also internal reasons against them, particularly from the manners, notwithstanding all the art with which you have endeavoured to throw a varnish on that circumstance; and the preservation of such long and such connected poems by oral tradition alone, during a course of fourteen centuries, is so much out of the ordinary course of human affairs, that it requires the strongest reasons to make us believe it.

My present purpose, therefore, is to apply to you, in the name of all the men of letters of this, and I may say of all other countries, to establish this capital point, and to give us proof that these poems are, I do not say so ancient as the age of Severus, but that they were not forged within these five years by James Macpherson. These proofs must not be arguments, but testimonies. People's ears are fortified against the former: the latter may yet find their way before the poems are consigned to total oblivion. Now the testimonies may, in my opinion, be of two kinds. Macpherson pretends that there is an ancient manuscript of part of Fingal, in the family, I think, of Clanronald. Get that fact ascertained by more than one person of credit; let these persons be acquainted with the Gaelic; let them compare the original and the translation; and let them testify the fidelity of the latter. But the chief point in which it will be necessary for you to exert yourself, will be to get positive testimony from many different hands, that such poems are vulgarly recited in the Highlands, and have there long been the entertainment of the people. This testimony must be as particular as it is positive. It will not be sufficient that a Highland gentleman or clergyman say or write to you, that he has heard such poems; nobody questions that there are traditional poems in that part of the country, where the names of Ossian and Fingal, and Oscar, and Gaul, are mentioned in every stanza. The only doubt is, whether these poems have any farther resemblance to the poems published by Macpherson. I was told by Bourke, a very ingenious Irish gentleman, the author of a tract on the Sublime and Beautiful, that on the first publication of Macpherson's book, all the Irish cried out, We know all these poems, we have always heard them from our infancy. But when he asked more particular questions, he could never learn that any one had ever heard, or could repeat the original of any one paragraph of the pretended translation. This generality, then, must be carefully guarded against, as being of no authority.

Your connexions among your brethren of the clergy, may here

be of great use to you. You may easily learn the names of all ministers of that country, who understand the language of it; you may write to them, expressing the doubts that have arisen, and desiring them to send for such of the bards as remain, and make them rehearse their ancient poems. Let the clergymen, then, have the translation in their hands, and let them write back to you, and inform you that they heard such a one, (naming him,) living in such a place, rehearse the original of such a passage, from such a page to such a page of the English translation, which appeared exact and faithful. If you give to the public a sufficient number of such testimonies, you may prevail. But I venture to foretel to you that nothing less will serve the purpose; nothing less will so much as command the attention of the public. Becket tells me that he is to give us a new edition of your Dissertation, accompanied with some remarks on Temora; here is a favourable opportunity for you to execute this purpose. You have a just and laudable zeal for the credit of these poems; they are, if genuine, one of the greatest curiosities, in all respects, that ever was discovered in the commonwealth of letters; and the child is, in a manner, become yours by adoption, as Macpherson has totally abandoned all care of it. These motives call upon you to exert yourself; and I think it were suitable to your candour, and most satisfactory also to the reader, to publish all the answers to all the letters you write, even though some of these letters should make somewhat against your own opinion in this affair. We shall always be the more assured that no arguments are strained beyond their proper force, and no contrary arguments suppressed, where such an entire communication is made to us. Becket joins me heartily in this application, and he owns to me, that the believers in the authenticity of the poems diminish every day among the men of sense and reflection. Nothing less than what I propose, can throw the balance on the other side. I depart from hence in about three weeks, and should be glad to hear your resolution before that time.

This journey to Paris is likely to contribute much to my entertainment, and will certainly tend much to improve my fortune; so that I have no reason to repent that I have allowed myself to be dragged from my retreat. I shall henceforth converse with authors, but shall not probably for some time have much leisure to peruse them; which is not perhaps the way of knowing them most to their advantage. I carried only four books along with me, a Virgil, a Horace, a Tasso, and a Tacitus. I could have wished also to carry my Homer, but I found him too bulky. I own that, in common decency, I ought to have left my Horace behind me, and

that I ought to be ashamed to look him in the face. For I am sensible that, at my years, no temptation would have seduced him from his retreat; nor would he ever have been induced to enter so late into the path of ambition.[1] But I deny that I enter into the path of ambition; I only walk into the green fields of amusement; and I affirm, that external amusement becomes more and more necessary as one advances in years, and can find less supplies from his own passions or imagination. I am, &c.[2]

(3.)

DR. BLAIR *to* HUME.

Edinburgh, 29th September, 1763.

DEAR SIR,—I am much obliged to you for the information you have communicated to me, and for the concern you show that justice should be done to our Highland Poems. From what I saw myself when at London, I could easily believe that the disposition of men of letters was rather averse to their reception as genuine; but I trusted that the internal characters of their authenticity, together with the occasional testimonies given to them by Highland gentlemen who are every where scattered, would gradually surmount these prejudices. For my own part, it is impossible for me to entertain the smallest doubt of their being real productions, and ancient ones, too, of the Highlands. Neither Macpherson's parts, though good, nor his industry, were equal to such a forgery. The whole publication, you know, was in its first rise accidental. Macpherson was entreated and dragged into it. Some of the MSS. sent to him passed through my hands. Severals of them he translated, in a manner, under my eye. He gave me these native and genuine accounts of them, which bore plain characters of truth. What he said was often confirmed to me by others. I had testimonies from several Highlanders concerning their authenticity, in words strong and explicit. And, setting all this aside, is it a thing which any man of sense can suppose, that Macpherson would venture to forge such a body of poetry, and give it to the public as ancient poems and songs, well known at this day through all the Highlands of Scotland, when he could have been refuted and exposed by every one of his own countrymen? Is it credible that he could bring so many thousand people into a conspiracy with him to keep his secret? or that some would not be found who, attached to their own ancient songs, would not cry out, "These are not the poems

[1] See this observation commented on by Blair, in vol. ii. p. 167.

[2] Laing's History, iv. 496. Report of the Highland Society on Ossian's Poems.

we deal in. You have forged characters and sentiments we know nothing about; you have modernized and dressed us up: we have much better songs and poems of our own." Who but John Bull could entertain the belief of an imposture so incredible as this? The utmost I should think any rational scepticism could suppose is this, that Macpherson might have sometimes interpolated, or endeavoured to improve, by some corrections of his own. Of this I am verily persuaded there was very little, if any at all. Had it prevailed, we would have been able to trace more marks of inconsistency, and a different hand and style; whereas, these poems are more remarkable for nothing than an entire, and supported, and uniform consistency of character and manner through the whole.

However, seeing we have to do with such incredulous people, I think it were a pity not to do justice to such valuable monuments of genius. I have already, therefore, entered upon the task you prescribe me, though I foresee it may give me some trouble. I have writ by last post to Sir James Macdonald, who is fortunately at this time in the Isle of Skye. I have also, through the Laird of Macleod, writ to Clanronald, and likewise to two clergymen in the Isle of Skye, men of letters and character; one of them, Macpherson minister of Sleat, the author of a very learned work about to be published concerning the Antiquities of Scotland. Several others in Argyleshire, the Islands, and other poetical regions, worthy clergymen, who are well versed in the Gaelic, I intend also without delay to make application to.

My requisition to them all is for such positive and express testimonies as you desire; MSS. if they have any, compared before witnesses with the printed book, and recitations of bards compared in the same manner. I have given them express directions in what manner to proceed, so as to avoid that loose generality which, as you observe, can signify nothing. What use it may be proper to put these testimonies to, I can only judge after having got all my materials. I apprehend there may be some difficulty in obtaining the consent of those concerned to publish their letters, nor might it be proper. But concerning this, I may afterwards advise with you and my other friends.

In the meantime, you may please acquaint Mr. Becket, that this must retard for some time the publication of his new edition with my Dissertation; as the least I can allow for the return of letters from such distant parts, where the communication by post is irregular and slow, together with the time necessary for their executing what is desired, will be three months, perhaps some more;

and, assuredly, any new evidence we can give the world, must accompany my Dissertation.

I am in some difficulty with Macpherson himself in this affair. Capricious as he is, I would not willingly hurt or disoblige him; and yet I apprehend that such an inquiry as this, which is like tracing him out, and supposing his veracity called in question, will not please him. I must write him by next post, and endeavour to put the affair in such a light as to soften him; which you, if you see him, may do likewise, and show him the necessity of something of this kind being done; and with more propriety, perhaps, by another than himself.[1]

(4.)

HUME *to* DR. BLAIR.

6th October, 1763.

MY DEAR SIR,—I am very glad you have undertaken the task which I used the freedom to recommend to you. Nothing less than what you propose will serve the purpose. You need expect no assistance from Macpherson, who flew into a passion when I told him of the letter I had wrote to you. But you must not mind so strange and heteroclite a mortal, than whom I have scarce ever known a man more perverse and unamiable. He will probably depart for Florida with governor Johnstone, and I would advise him to travel among the Chickisaws or Cherokees, in order to tame him and civilize him.

I should be much pleased to hear of the success of your labours. Your method of directing to me is under cover to the Earl of Hertford, Northumberland House; any letters that come to me under that direction, will be sent over to me at Paris.

I beg my compliments to Robertson and Jardine. I am very sorry to hear of the state of Ferguson's health. John Hume went to the country yesterday with Lord Bute. I was introduced the other day to that noble lord, at his desire. I believe him a very good man, a better man than a politician.

Since writing the above, I have been in company with Mrs. Montague, a lady of great distinction in this place, and a zealous partisan of Ossian. I told her of your intention, and even used the freedom to read your letter to her. She was extremely pleased with your project; and the rather as the Duc de Nivernois, she said, had talked to her much on that subject last winter, and

[1] MS. R.S.E.

desired, if possible, to get collected some proofs of the authenticity of these poems, which he proposed to lay before the Académie des Belles Lettres at Paris. You see, then, that you are upon a great stage in this inquiry, and that many people have their eyes upon you. This is a new motive for rendering your proofs as complete as possible. I cannot conceive any objection, which a man, even of the gravest character, could have to your publication of his letters, which will only attest a plain fact known to him. Such scruples, if they occur, you must endeavour to remove. For on this trial of yours will the judgment of the public finally depend.

Lord Bath, who was in the company, agreed with me, that such documents of authenticity are entirely necessary and indispensable.

Please to write to me as soon as you make any advances, that I may have something to say on the subject to the literati of Paris. I beg my compliments to all those who bear that character at Edinburgh. I cannot but look upon all of them as my friends. I am, &c.[1]

II.

ESSAY ON THE GENUINENESS OF THE POEMS.[2]

I think the fate of this production the most curious effect of prejudice, where superstition had no share, that ever was in the world. A tiresome, insipid performance; which, if it had been presented in its real form, as the work of a contemporary, an obscure Highlander, no man could ever have had the patience to have once perused, has, by passing for the poetry of a royal bard, who flourished fifteen centuries ago, been universally read, has been pretty generally admired, and has been translated, in prose and verse, into several languages of Europe. Even the style of the supposed English translation has been admired, though harsh and absurd in the highest degree; jumping perpetually from verse to prose, and from prose to verse; and running, most of it, in the light cadence and measure of Molly Mog. Such is the Erse epic, which has been puffed with a zeal and enthusiasm that has drawn a ridicule on my countrymen.

But, to cut off at once the whole source of its reputation, I shall

[1] Laing's History, iv. 500. Report of the Highland Society.

[2] See this referred to in Vol. II., p. 85.

collect a few very obvious arguments against the notion of its great antiquity, with which so many people have been intoxicated, and which alone made it worthy of any attention.

(1.) The very manner in which it was presented to the public forms a strong presumption against its authenticity. The pretended translator goes on a mission to the Highlands to recover and collect a work, which, he affirmed, was dispersed, in fragments, among the natives. He returns, and gives a quarto volume, and then another quarto, with the same unsupported assurance as if it were a translation of the Orlando Furioso, or Lousiade, or any poem the best known in Europe. It might have been expected, at least, that he would have told the public, and the subscribers to his mission, and the purchasers of his book, *This part I got from such a person, in such a place; that other part, from such another person. I was enabled to correct my first copy of such a passage by the recital of such another person; a fourth supplied such a defect in my first copy.* By such a history of his gradual discoveries he would have given some face of probability to them. Any man of common sense, who was in earnest, must, in this case, have seen the peculiar necessity of that precaution any man that had regard to his own character, would have anxiously followed that obvious and easy method. All the friends of the pretended translator exhorted and entreated him to give them and the public that satisfaction. No! those who could doubt his veracity were fools, whom it was not worth while to satisfy. The most incredible of all facts was to be taken on his word, whom nobody knew; and an experiment was to be made, I suppose in jest, how far the credulity of the public would give way to assurance and dogmatical affirmation.

(2.) But, to show the utter incredibility of the fact, let these following considerations be weighed, or, rather, simply reflected on; for it seems ridiculous to weigh them. Consider the size of these poems. What is given us is asserted to be only a part of a much greater collection; yet even these pieces amount to two quartos. And they were composed, you say, in the Highlands, about fifteen centuries ago; and have been faithfully transmitted, ever since, by oral tradition, through ages totally ignorant of letters, by the rudest, perhaps, of all the European nations; the most necessitous, the most turbulent, the most ferocious, and the most unsettled. Did ever any event happen that approached within a hundred degrees of this mighty wonder, even to the nations the most fortunate in their climate and situation? Can a ballad be shown that has passed, uncorrupted, by oral tradition, through

three generations, among the Greeks, or Italians, or Phœnicians, or Egyptians, or even among the natives of such countries as Otaheite or Molacca, who seem exempted by nature from all attention but to amusement, to poetry, and music?

But the Celtic nations, it is said, had peculiar advantages for preserving their traditional poetry. The Irish, the Welsh, the Bretons, are all Celtic nations, much better entitled than the Highlanders, from their soil, and climate, and situation, to have leisure for these amusements. They, accordingly, present us not with complete epic and historical poems, (for they never had the assurance to go that length,) but with very copious and circumstantial traditions, which are allowed, by all men of sense, to be scandalous and ridiculous impostures.

(3.) The style and genius of these pretended poems are another sufficient proof of the imposition. The Lapland and Runic odes, conveyed to us, besides their small compass, have a savage rudeness, and sometimes grandeur, suited to those ages. But this Erse poetry has an insipid correctness, and regularity, and uniformity, which betrays a man without genius, that has been acquainted with the productions of civilized nations, and had his imagination so limited to that tract, that it was impossible for him even to mimic the character which he pretended to assume.

The manners are still a more striking proof of their want of authenticity. We see nothing but the affected generosity and gallantry of chivalry, which are quite unknown, not only to all savage people, but to every nation not trained in these artificial modes of thinking. In Homer, for instance, and Virgil, and Ariosto, the heroes are represented as making a nocturnal incursion into the camp of the enemy. Homer and Virgil, who certainly were educated in much more civilized ages than those of Ossian, make no scruple of representing their heroes as committing undistinguished slaughter on the sleeping foe. But Orlando walks quietly through the camp of the Saracens, and scorns to kill even an infidel who cannot defend himself. Gaul and Oscar are knight-errants, still more romantic: they make a noise in the midst of the enemy's camp, that they may waken them, and thereby have a right to fight with them and to kill them. Nay, Fingal carries his ideas of chivalry still farther; much beyond what was ever dreamt of by Amadis de Gaul or Lancelot de Lake. When his territory is invaded, he scorns to repel the enemy with his whole force: he sends only an equal number against them, under an inferior captain: when these are repulsed, he sends a second detachment; and it is not till after a double defeat, that he deigns himself to descend from the hill,

where he had remained, all the while, an idle spectator, and to attack the enemy. Fingal and Swaran combat each other all day, with the greatest fury. When darkness suspends the fight, they feast together with the greatest amity, and then renew the combat with the return of light. Are these the manners of barbarous nations, or even of people that have common sense? We may remark, that all this narrative is supposed to be given us by a contemporary poet. The facts, therefore, must be supposed entirely, or nearly, conformable to truth. The gallantry and extreme delicacy towards the women, which is found in these productions, is, if possible, still more contrary to the manners of barbarians. Among all rude nations, force and courage are the predominant virtues; and the inferiority of the females, in these particulars, renders them an object of contempt, not of deference and regard.

(4.) But I derive a new argument against the antiquity of these poems, from the general tenor of the narrative. Where manners are represented in them, probability, or even possibility, are totally disregarded: but in all other respects, the events are within the course of nature; no giants, no monsters, no magic, no incredible feats of strength or activity. Every transaction is conformable to familiar experience, and scarcely even deserves the name of wonderful. Did this ever happen in ancient and barbarous poetry? Why is this characteristic wanting, so essential to rude and ignorant ages? Ossian, you say, was singing the exploits of his contemporaries, and therefore could not falsify them in any great degree. But if this had been a restraint, your pretended Ossian had never sung the exploits of his contemporaries; he had gone back a generation or two, which would have been sufficient to throw an entire obscurity on the events; and he would thereby have attained the marvellous, which is alone striking to barbarians. I desire it may be observed, that manners are the only circumstances which a rude people cannot falsify; because they have no notion of any manners beside their own: but it is easy for them to let loose their imagination, and violate the course of nature, in every other particular; and indeed they take no pleasure in any other kind of narrative. In Ossian, nature is violated, where alone she ought to have been preserved; is preserved where alone she ought to have been violated.

(5.) But there is another species of the marvellous, wanting in Ossian, which is inseparable from all nations, civilized as well as barbarous, but still more, if possible, from the barbarous, and that is religion; no religious sentiment in this Erse poetry. All those Celtic heroes are more complete atheists than ever were bred in the

school of Epicurus. To account for this singularity, we are told that a few generations before Ossian, the people quarrelled with their Druidical priests, and having expelled them, never afterwards adopted any other species of religion. It is not quite unnatural, I own, for the people to quarrel with their priests,—as we did with ours at the Reformation; but we attached ourselves with fresh zeal to our new preachers and new system; and this passion increased in proportion to our hatred of the old. But I suppose the reason of this strange absurdity in our new Erse poetry, is, that the author, finding by the assumed age of his heroes, that he must have given them the Druidical religion, and not trusting to his literature, (which seems indeed to be very slender) for making the representations consistent with antiquity, thought it safest to give them no religion at all; a circumstance so wonderfully unnatural, that it is sufficient alone, if men had eyes, to detect the imposition.

(6.) The state of the arts, as represented in those poems, is totally incompatible with the age assigned to them. We know, that the houses even of the Southern Britons, till conquered by the Romans, were nothing but huts erected in the woods; but a stately stone building is mentioned by Ossian, of which the walls remain, after it is consumed with fire. The melancholy circumstance of a fox is described, who looks out at the windows; an image, if I be not mistaken, borrowed from the Scriptures. The Caledonians, as well as the Irish, had no shipping but currachs, or wicker boats covered with hides: yet are they represented as passing, in great military expeditions, from the Hebrides to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; a most glaring absurdity. They live entirely by hunting, yet muster armies, which make incursions to these countries as well as to Ireland: though it is certain from the experience of America, that the whole Highlands would scarce subsist a hundred persons by hunting. They are totally unacquainted with fishing; though that occupation first tempts all rude nations to venture on the sea. Ossian alludes to a wind or water-mill, a machine then unknown to the Greeks and Romans, according to the opinion of the best antiquaries. His barbarians, though ignorant of tillage, are well acquainted with the method of working all kinds of metals. The harp is the musical instrument of Ossian; but the bagpipe, from time immemorial, has been the instrument of the Highlanders. If ever the harp had been known among them, it never had given place to the other barbarous discord.

Stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen.

(7.) All the historical facts of this poem are opposed by tradi-

tions, which, if all these tales be not equally contemptible, seem to merit much more attention. The Irish Scoti are the undoubted ancestors of the present Highlanders, who are but a small colony of that ancient people. But the Irish traditions make Fingal, Ossian, Oscar, all Irishmen, and place them some centuries distant from the Erse heroes. They represent them as giants, and monsters, and enchanters, a sure mark of a considerable antiquity of these traditions. I ask the partisans of Erse poetry, since the names of these heroes have crept over to Ireland, and have become quite familiar to the natives of that country, how it happens, that not a line of this poetry, in which they are all celebrated, which, it is pretended, alone preserves their memory with our Highlanders, and which is composed by one of these heroes themselves in the Irish language, ever found its way thither? The songs and traditions of the Senachies, the genuine poetry of the Irish, carry in their rudeness and absurdity the inseparable attendants of barbarism, a very different aspect from the insipid correctness of Ossian; where the incidents, if you will pardon the antithesis, are the most unnatural, merely because they are natural. The same observation extends to the Welsh, another Celtic nation.

(8.) The fiction of these poems is, if possible, still more palpably detected, by the great numbers of other traditions, which, the author pretends, are still fresh in the Highlands, with regard to all the personages. The poems, composed in the age of Truthil and Cormac, ancestors of Ossian, are, he says, full of complaints against the roguery and tyranny of the Druids. He talks as familiarly of the poetry of that period as Lucian or Longinus would of the Greek poetry of the Socratic age. I suppose here is a new rich mine of poetry ready to break out upon us, if the author thinks it can turn to account. For probably he does not mind the danger of detection, which he has little reason to apprehend from his experience of the public credulity. But I shall venture to assert, without any reserve or further inquiry, that there is no Highlander who is not, in some degree, a man of letters, that ever so much as heard there was a Druid in the world. The margin of every page almost of this wonderful production is supported, as he pretends, by minute oral traditions with regard to the personages. To the poem of Dar-thula, there is prefixed a long account of the pedigree, marriages, and adventures of three brothers, Nathos, Althos, and Ardan, heroes that lived fifteen hundred years ago in Argyleshire, and whose memory, it seems, is still celebrated there, and in every part of the Highlands. How ridiculous to advance such a pretension to the learned, who know that there is no tradition of Alexander

the great all over the East; that the Turks, who have heard of him from their communication with the Greeks, believe him to have been the captain of Solomon's guard; that the Greek and Roman story, the moment it departs from the historical ages, becomes a heap of fiction and absurdity; that Cyrus himself, the conqueror of the East, became so much unknown, even in little more than half a century, that Herodotus himself, born and bred in Asia, within the limits of the Persian empire, could tell nothing of him, more than of Croesus, the contemporary of Cyrus, and who reigned in the neighbourhood of the historian, but the most ridiculous fables; and that the grandfather of Hengist and Horsa, the first Saxon conquerors, was conceived to be a divinity. I suppose it is sufficiently evident, that without the help of books and history, the very name of Julius Cæsar would at present be totally unknown in Europe. A gentleman, who travelled into Italy, told me, that in visiting Frescati or Tusculum, his cicerone showed him the foundation and ruins of Cicero's country house. He asked the fellow who this Cicero might be, "Un grandissimo gigante," said he.

(9.) I ask, since the memory of Fingal and his ancestors and descendants is still so fresh in the Highlands, how it happens, that none of the compilers of the Scotch fabulous history ever laid hold of them, and inserted them in the list of our ancient monarchs, but were obliged to have recourse to direct fiction and lying to make out their genealogies? It is to be remarked, that the Highlanders, who are now but an inferior part of the nation, anciently composed the whole; so that no tradition of theirs could be unknown to the court, the nobility, and the whole kingdom. Where, then, have these wonderful traditions skulked during so many centuries, that they have never come to light till yesterday? And the very names of our ancient kings are unknown; though it is pretended, that a very particular narrative of their transactions was still preserved, and universally diffused among a numerous tribe, who are the original stem of the nation. Father Innes, the only judicious writer that ever touched our ancient history, finds in monastic records the names, and little more than the names, of kings from Fergus, whom we call Fergus the Second, who lived long after the supposed Fingal: and he thence begins the true history of the nation. He had too good sense to give any attention to pretended traditions even of kings, much less would he have believed that the memory and adventures of every leader of banditti in every valley of the Highlands, could be circumstantially preserved by oral tradition through more than fifteen centuries.

(10.) I shall observe, that the character of the author, from all

his publications, (for I shall mention nothing else,) gives us the greatest reason to suspect him of such a ludicrous imposition on the public. For to be sure it is only ludicrous; or at most a trial of wit, like that of the sophist, who gave us Phalaris' Epistles, or of him that counterfeited Cicero's Consolation, or supplied the fragments of Petronius. These literary amusements have been very common; and unless supported by too violent asseverations, or persisted in too long, never drew the opprobrious appellation of impostor on the author.

He writes an ancient history of Britain, which is plainly ludicrous. He gives us a long circumstantial history of the emigrations of the Belgae, Cimbri, and Sarmatae, so unsupported by any author of antiquity that nothing but a particular revelation could warrant it; and yet it is delivered with such seeming confidence, (for we must not think he was in earnest,) that the history of the Punic wars is not related with greater seriousness by Livy. He has even left palpable contradictions in his narrative, in order to try the faith of his reader. He tells us, for instance, that the present inhabitants of Germany have no more connexion with the Germans mentioned by Tacitus, than with the ancient inhabitants of Peloponnesus: the Saxons and Angles, in particular, were all Sarmatians, a quite different tribe from the Germans, in manners, laws, language, and customs. Yet a few pages after, when he pretends to deliver the origin of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, he professedly derives the whole account from Tacitus. All this was only an experiment to see how far the force of affirmation could impose on the credulity of the public: but it did not succeed; he was here in the open daylight of Greek and Roman erudition, not in the obscurity of his Erse poetry and traditions. Finding the style of his Ossian admired by some, he attempts a translation of Homer in the very same style. He begins and finishes, in six weeks, a work that was for ever to eclipse the translation of Pope, whom he does not even deign to mention in his preface; but this joke was still more unsuccessful: he made a shift, however, to bring the work to a second edition, where he says, that, notwithstanding all the envy of his malignant opponents, his name alone will preserve the work to a more equitable posterity!

In short, let him now take off the mask, and fairly and openly laugh at the credulity of the public, who could believe that long Erse epics had been secretly preserved in the Highlands of Scotland, from the age of Severus till his time.

The imposition is so gross, that he may well ask the world how they could ever possibly believe him to be in earnest?

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 28 March, 2016